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THE GREAT MISNOMER

OR

THE LORD'S SUPPER RESCUED FROM THE PERVERSION OF ITS ORIGINAL DESIGN

BY

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PHILADELPHIA

THE GRIFFITH & ROWLAND PRESS

BOSTON CHICAGO ST. LOUIS

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Published July, 1914

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TO THE MINISTERS OF JESUS
AND
TO STUDENTS FOR THE MINISTRY

THIS WORK

IN EXPOSITION OF OUR LORD'S MEMORIAL RITE
AND IN DEFENSE OF IT AGAINST PERVERSION
IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR

50062

"What mean ye by this service?" *Exodus 12 : 26.*

"This do in remembrance of me." *Luke 22 : 19.*

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." *Isaiah 5 : 20.*

PREFACE

In these rapid, rushing, busy times of ours, if men, impatient and restless, read at all, they do not like to be detained a moment by explanations on the threshold of a subject, and often "skip" them, and plunge *in medias res.* So we had not intended to write any preface to our book. But, upon further reflection, trusting to the kind indulgence of the courteous reader, we venture to make a few preliminary statements.

We have always felt that the strictness observed by a large body of Christian people, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, was right, and that opposition to it was inspired by no proper principle at all, but was the result of misconceptions—blended, perhaps, with something of morbid sentiment—due to lack of serious thought and of earnest and candid scriptural inquiry. And if this strictness was right, we felt that it might be made so to appear to all fair-minded persons. The chief difficulty in the way of this seemed to us not to lie so much in different views respecting the proper priority of baptism to the Supper, or of the proper action and real substance of the precedent ordinance, as in a misapprehension, which pertinaciously connected itself with the great essential purpose of the

rite, and in prejudices and predilections thereby engendered.

All evangelical Christians concede, in theory, that to commemorate Christ in his sufferings and death for his people, is the great purpose of the Lord's Supper. But with this many have connected, as essential, another object, that of the mutual communion of believers—which is only, at most, incidental, and infinitely inferior to the main design—and have practically superseded the former idea by the latter.

If all this, with other important and closely related truths, could be properly shown, it was felt that the outcry against so-called "close communion" would be seen to have no sufficient cause, and cease to be raised; and thus a false standard and test of fellowship between believers would be set aside, and the whole question of such fellowship be relegated to its proper place and put upon its only true basis, not the narrow one of formal and outward union in a mere ceremonial observance, but the broad one of that higher and better spiritual union, born of kindred Christian character, and of the exercise toward each other of genuine Christian charity, true brotherly love, generated and formed, inspired and sustained, by the Spirit and Word of God. Moreover, the discussion would discover and expose other and deeper perversions of the sacred rite, and indicate their proper scriptural remedy.

We have striven, in our discussion, to free and dis-

encumber a great question—the whole controversy respecting our Lord's memorial rite—from the biasing and blinding effects of a great error, whose evil influence has been wide-spread and prevalent, and thus to lift the whole subject to a higher plane, above the warping and misleading tendencies of individual and personal sentiment, social feeling, and all mere party ends. Whatever the supposed interests of particular parties on the one hand, or those of a universal outward affiliation and brotherhood among the followers of Jesus on the other, we know that the truth of God and his law are supreme, and that if they be vindicated and established, neither the interests of any party that deserves to be supported, nor those of a true brotherhood and affiliation among Christians, can be seriously harmed, but that they will rather be strengthened and maintained; for they all alike rest upon the truth and law of God.

In what we have written, we have had toward others of a different Christian name no spirit of hostility or of disparagement. We regard them as our brethren, the children of our common Father, the servants of our common Lord. We claim an interest in Fénelon and Pascal, Luther and Melancthon, Calvin and Knox, Leighton and Hooker, Wesley and Whitefield, as well as in De Bruys and Menno, Bunyan and Gill, Booth and Fuller, Hall and Foster, Haldane and Carson. They all alike held the great saving truths of the

gospel. They all alike did valiant service for those truths. We reverence them. We cherish their memory. The writings of many of them we hold among the richest treasures of our library. And we rejoice in believing that, in no slight degree, through their manifold labors and holy lives, there is a constant approximation toward a truer union and communion among all believers, and the realization, in its fulness, of the prayer of Jesus, that his people all might be one, as he and his Father are one—one in essential principle and spirit, one in truth, and in love of the truth; one in character and life, aim and effort for the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

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PART I

THE LORD'S SUPPER

I

AN AXIOM

NAMES should be, as far as possible, significant of the things named. They should express, represent, describe, define them. Not more naturally than logically, in the beginning of language, did the first names do this. All appreciate the importance of rightly naming substances and their properties in the physical world; and also of properly naming, by the employment of appropriate terms, thoughts, ideas, facts, principles in the mental realm. The name should neither signify too much nor too little. Above all, it should not signify anything different from the thing named.

Upon this axiomatic principle depend the justness of all science, the soundness of all philosophy, the progress and stability of all knowledge. Nay, intimately connected with it are all right conduct, pure morality, true religion. Disregard it, and falsehood takes the place of truth, vice the place of virtue, discord and confusion the place of harmony and order.

"The success and enduring influence of any systematic construction of truth, be it secular or sacred," says Shedd—as quoted by that great master of the philosophy of words and names, Archbishop Trench—"depends as much upon an exact terminology as upon close and deep thinking itself." [1]

[1] "Study of Words," p. 4.

"I think," says Trench himself, "we may observe very often the way in which controversies, after long eddying backward and forward, hither and thither, concentrate themselves at last in some single word, which is felt to contain all that the one party would affirm and the other would deny. After a desultory swaying of the battle hither and thither, 'the high places of the field,' the critical position, on the winning of which everything turns, is discovered at last. Thus the whole controversy of the Catholic Church with the Arians finally gathers itself up in a single word, '*homoousion*'; that with the Nestorians in another, '*theotokos*.' One might be bold to affirm that the entire sect of Buddhism is found in 'Nirvâna'; for take away the word and it is not too much to say that the keystone to the whole arch is gone. So too, when the medieval church allowed and then adopted the word 'transubstantiation' (and we know the exact date of this), it committed itself to a doctrine from which henceforth it was impossible to recede. The floating error had become a fixed one, and exercised a far mightier influence on the minds of all who received it than, except for this, it would have ever done." [2]

"Woe unto them," says the great evangelic prophet, Isaiah, "that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." [3]

[2] Ibid., pp. 25, 26. [3] Isa. 5 : 20.

II

THE SUPPER

What is the Lord's Supper? What are its essential character and grand design? The brief words of Jesus at its institution, as given by the inspired Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke (John gives no formal account of the Supper at all), and by the apostle Paul subsequently, clearly show, when the several statements of them are taken together, as they should be, the true nature and design of the holy rite, and sufficiently define it. Matthew says: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." [1] Mark's statement is substantially identical with Matthew's.[2] Luke says: "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." [3] Paul says: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given

[1] Matt. 26 : 26-28. [2] Mark 14 : 22-24. [3] Luke 22 : 19, 20.

thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." [4]

Simple, yet sublime, rite! Full of divine beauty and significance! How appropriate and striking the symbols of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus! "Nothing could have been more properly chosen to signify the efficacy of our Saviour's atonement in giving life and joy to our souls, than bread, the staff of life, and wine, the exhilarating and strengthening quality of which was expressed in an ancient parable, where it is said to cheer God and men." [5]

As often as these divinely appointed elements are received at the table of the Lord, they recall to the mind, and bring vividly before it, the person, sufferings, and death of the divine Redeemer—his body, bruised and broken, and his blood shed for his people—and thus touch and impress the heart as nothing else could do.

This sacred feast—sometimes termed the Christian passover, because, as a memorial of "Christ our passover," it is the antitype of which the Jewish Passover was the type, the substance of which that was the shadow, the great memorial rite of Christianity, as that was of Judaism—is rightly called the Lord's Supper, because it was instituted by our divine Lord, and

[4] 1 Cor. 11 : 23-26.
[5] Dick's "Lectures on Theology," Vol. II, p. 356.

first observed at night; and, as its antitype, took the place of the paschal feast, which was a supper, that is, a meal or feast at night.

The objection sometimes urged that it is improperly called a supper because it is so simple and meager, is, we think, of no force. A supper is an evening meal. It may be rich and sumptuous, or it may be poor and plain. The paschal supper of the Israelites, as originally instituted and observed on the night of their flight from Egypt, was the simplest and humblest of meals. Still, it was styled a supper, and even a feast. So the humble repast of Christ and his apostles, instituted, as we have seen, and observed at night, was a supper, however scant and outwardly unimposing. The Greek term (δεῖπνον), used to express it, means merely a meal. In the morning it was a breakfast; at noon a dinner; at night a supper.

III

COMMUNION

To the great commemorative rite of Christianity, which has been defined and briefly described in the preceding section, many different appellations have been given. By many millions of professed Christians, the Roman Catholics, it has long been, and still is, called, together with its accompanying services, the mass; the consecration and oblation of the host, or sacred wafer, not merely representing, but actually being, in their view, the very "body, blood, soul, and divinity," the whole substance and personality of the Christ.[1] When administered to the dying the rite was called the *viaticum,* or provision for their journey to the skies. Often also, as the supposed finishing and consummating rite, it was called the *perfection.*[2] It is still very widely termed the Eucharist, or service of thanksgiving, because Jesus, before blessing and breaking the bread, gave thanks. But it were tedious and unprofitable to attempt an enumeration of all the names which it has borne.[3]

The most striking of these names, however, and that generally used by all Protestant Christendom especially, is the sweet-sounding and beautiful one, the communion. What is its meaning?

[1] See Bishop Hopkins' refutation of Milner's "End of Controversy," Vol. II. pp. 223, 224.
[2] "Hammond on the Canons," pp. 49, 157.
[3] See Turretini Opera, Tom. III, *Sacra Coena,* Quaest. xxi. *passim,* Edinburgh Edition.

To commune is to have intercourse in contemplation or meditation; to converse, talk together familiarly, impart sentiments mutually. Communion is intercourse between persons; fellowship, concord, agreement; interchange of thought, feeling, and good offices; giving and receiving.

As used ecclesiastically and technically, as well as popularly, to express participation of the Lord's Supper, communion is regarded as a token of mutual Christian confidence, a sign of fellowship, a demonstration of religious sympathy and of fraternal love; "the principal pledge," says Robert Hall, "of Christian fraternity, by those who, together, celebrate the sacred rite." [4]

[4] Hall's "Works," Vol. I, p. 291.

IV

APPLICATION OF THE AXIOM

Now, in the light of the foregoing inspired account of the Lord's Supper, and in that of the definition of communion in its broad and general sense, according to the best authorities, applying the axiomatic principle stated in the commencement of this discussion, we inquire: Is the latter the proper appellation of the former? Is the Lord's Supper rightly named the communion? Simply to ask these questions is to answer them.

As used, ecclesiastically and technically, to express participation of the Lord's Supper, communion is, we have seen, regarded as a token of mutual Christian confidence, a sign of fellowship, a demonstration of religious sympathy and of fraternal love; the principal pledge, indeed, of such love and sympathy. Again we ask, with all seriousness and solemnity, in view of the simple scriptural representation of the rite which has been given: Is this ecclesiastical and technical definition of communion, any more than the general one, an adequate estimate of the nature and design of the Lord's Supper? Is this a proper statement of the purpose of the holy ordinance which our divine Lord so tenderly and touchingly bade his disciples observe —in memory of himself?

And again we say, that simply to ask these questions is to answer them.

This famous theological and ecclesiastical name, sounding and resounding everywhere, pronounced with sympathy and love and deepest reverence by every tongue, is very beautiful. It is beautiful in Greek, *κοινωνία*; beautiful in Latin, *communio;* not less beautiful in English, communion.

And yet this celebrated name, as widely used by the later Greeks and Romans, by their successors, by the whole English-speaking people of the world, and by others, however beautiful and sweet-sounding, however in itself significant, is an erroneous appellation of the Lord's Supper, a false name, a misnomer. As we at once perceive, and shall yet more fully see, it cannot bear the axiomatic test proposed. It is not significant of the thing named. It does not properly represent or define it. It expresses both too much and too little. It not only obscures, instead of illustrating, the main idea of the rite to which it is applied, but it actually substitutes for that idea another and altogether different one.

No one can overestimate the "immense importance," to use the strong language of Archbishop Trench, "of possessing such names for things, as shall not *involve,* or *suggest,* an error. . . Resuming, as words do, the past, shaping the future, how important it is that significant facts or tendencies in the world's history should receive their right names. It is a corrupting of the very springs and sources of knowledge when we bind up, not a truth but an error, in the very nomenclature which we use. It is the putting an obstacle in the way, which, however imperceptibly, is yet ever at work, hindering any right apprehension of the

thing which has been thus erroneously noted. Out of the sense of this an eminent German scholar of the last century, writing 'On the Influence of Opinions on Language,' did not stop here, nor make this the entire title of his book, but added another and further clause —and the 'Influence of Language on Opinions.'" This wondrous force of words "is an influence which has been powerfully felt in every region of human knowledge—in science, in art, in morals, in theology. The reactive energy of words, not merely on the passions of men (for that of course), but on their opinions, calmly and deliberately formed, would furnish a very curious chapter in the history of human knowledge and human ignorance. . . Nowhere is accuracy more vital than in words having to do with the chief facts and objects of our faith; for such words, as Coleridge has observed, are never inert, but constantly exercise an immense reactive influence, whether men know it or not, on such as use them, or often hear them used by others." [1]

[1] "Study of Words," pp. 146, 147, 151.

V

A PURELY COMMEMORATIVE ORDINANCE

From those declarations of our Lord, and of the inspired Evangelists, which we have quoted in a preceding section, it is clear that the sacred Supper was designated to be a purely commemorative ordinance. It is essentially a feast in commemoration of Christ, not a feast of fellowship with each other, on the part of those who participate in it. This is, both theologically and practically, a distinction of the greatest moment. For the apostles to have regarded the Supper as a feast of fellowship and communion among themselves, rather than of commemoration of the dying love of Christ, would have been deeply to disparage and dishonor him. It would have been to put themselves before and above him. This had been the grossest and most selfish perversion. But at such a time, and by such men, in the immediate presence of their adored Lord, whose eye was dimmed, whose head was bowed, whose breast was heaving with anguish at the dread prospect of being taken from them by a violent and bloody death, such an unnatural and monstrous perversion would have been altogether impossible. Thinking only of him whom their souls loved, their dear divine Lord, they forgot themselves.

When, then, any of the professed followers of Jesus make the holy Supper a boasted feast of fellowship and

communion among themselves, rather than of commemoration of their divine Lord, they are guilty of perversion which we have said was impossible to the high-hearted, great-souled men, inflexibly faithful to Christ and his cause, who first observed the blessed rite.

When too, such persons make mutual participation of the Lord's Supper an ultimate test of Christian recognition and fellowship between professed believers, they are guilty of a deeper perversion still. Yet more do they violate the high and holy design of this heavenly rite, this rite of pure, disinterested love, when they prostitute it to the unworthy purposes of a carnal and selfish partisanship. The Supper of our Lord was instituted for no such ends as these, and cannot subserve them without utter disregard of its grand design and violence to its whole spirit.

This solemn and affecting rite of the Christian church is, we have said, the antitype of which the Jewish Passover was the type, the substance of which that was the shadow; the great memorial rite of Christianity, as that was the great memorial rite of Judaism.

That three of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and John, say nothing in terms of the institution of the Lord's Supper as a memorial rite, is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that Matthew wrote specially for the Jews, who, perfectly familiar with the great purpose of the Passover as a purely memorial rite, did not at all need to be told that the Lord's Supper, which took its place, was instituted to subserve a similar end; that Mark wrote, like Matthew, mainly for the Jews (though perhaps to some extent Hellenistic and other foreign Jews), that he copied Matthew a great deal,

and so accords with him that the great Augustine (with whom many eminently learned and able men have agreed) regarded the Gospel of Mark as but an abridgment or epitome of the Gospel of Matthew; and that, if this view be not accepted, then another, sustained by a still greater weight of authority, may be taken (a view which amounts virtually to the same thing in respect to our present argument, and equally shows that Mark did not need particularly to characterize the Supper as a memorial rite, inasmuch as those for whom he mainly wrote would, with the information they already possessed, take that for granted): that "the almost unanimous voice of antiquity" declares that Mark, who was the disciple, attendant, and amanuensis of Peter, "wrote his Gospel under the inspection and dictation of Peter," to whom "the gospel of the circumcision," as Paul says, was committed,[1] and whose ministry "was chiefly employed in converting and instructing his countrymen, the Jews, who abounded at that time in the imperial city," where he is supposed (though many have thought without sufficient evidence) to have long lived and preached, and where Mark is believed to have written his Gospel;[2] and, finally, that the fourth Evangelist, John, as has been already stated, gives no formal account at all of the institution of the Lord's Supper or of the paschal feast. "Nor," says Newcombe, "was express mention of it necessary in Saint John's supplemental history."[3]

[1] Gal. 2 : 7.

[2] See Horne's "Introduction," Vol. II, pp. 304-307, and Campbell's "Four Gospels," Vol. II, pp. 152-157.

[3] Robinson's "Newcombe," note, p. 290.

Luke and Paul, however, writing chiefly for the Gentiles, who knew nothing of the Jewish Passover, and consequently nothing of its character as an essentially memorial rite, felt it to be particularly necessary in giving an account of the Lord's Supper, or Christian Passover, to state distinctly and strongly its great essential purpose as a memorial rite; as with the utmost clearness and emphasis they do.

Thus does it appear that the fact that only two of the four inspired writers who give an account of the Lord's Supper make prominent, or emphasize, its memorial character, so far from weakening the argument for its purely commemorative nature and design, when viewed in connection with the special and peculiar circumstances under which they wrote, adds much to the force and conclusiveness of that argument

VI

COMMUNION BETWEEN BELIEVERS

Not having been primarily instituted to effect personal communion between those who observe it together, our divine Lord's commemorative rite has no peculiar or special adaptation to such an end. In fact it does not affect it at all except incidentally, and in subordination to its main design. As we have already intimated, there is no reason to believe that Peter and James and John, or any of the other apostles, had any personal and vividly conscious communion with each other when they first partook of the sacred Supper. Certainly, it is not to be believed that the loyal eleven had any real fellowship or communion with the traitor, Judas; if, indeed, as is doubtful, he participated with them in the observance of the rite. Communion between believers is an active, intelligent, and voluntary exercise of the soul; a matter of mental and spiritual consciousness. But, at the Lord's Supper, one may not at all, for obvious reasons, think of his fellow participant. He may not even be aware of his presence in the house of the Lord. They may occupy positions widely apart, or, if they sit side by side, they may have no acquaintance, special congeniality, or personal sympathy with each other.

No reason is there, then, drawn either from the word of God, or from the nature and fitness of things, as we

shall yet more fully see in the course of our discussion, for regarding the Supper of the Lord as a rite of mutual communion, a pledge of fellowship, and a demonstration of fraternal love and confidence among those who together celebrate it; though, as we freely admit, there may be in individual instances, and doubtless often is, incidentally, a sweet and beautiful communion of heart with heart, as in all other acts of united spiritual service. Of such communion, however, there is unquestionably far more in social prayer and praise, in loving converse and companionship, in a thousand acts of united work and worship among those who, upon principle, never sit down together at the sacred board than is ordinarily enjoyed at that board itself by those even whose views are in full accord respecting its character and requisitions. Certainly, infinitely more of such communion between God's people is there in the social and fraternal exercises which we have mentioned than they could possibly enjoy if, compromising conscience and sacrificing principle, they were together to partake of the Supper of the Lord.

"In former ages of the church, that is, from the close of the second century downward, until heathenism was obliterated, it was generally but erroneously supposed by almost all that Christian fellowship of communion consisted chiefly in praying together. Christians would never unite in saying 'Our Father who art in heaven,' would not even pray in the same house of worship with those whom they did not consider orthodox Christians. Heathens, unbelievers, heretics, persons suspected or excommunicated, even catechumens or candidates for baptism, and members of other sects

were admitted to hear the psalmody and reading of the Scriptures and the discourses, but were invariably excluded from the building before the prayers of the church were offered. Our views of prayer are much more just than these." [1]

So far from there being, in the language which we have quoted from the Scriptures respecting the institution, nature, and design of the Lord's Supper, or in that of any New Testament writer concerning it, anything to warrant our regarding it as the rite of mutual communion among those who partake of it together, there is nothing properly suggestive of such a conception of the ordinance.

And as there is nothing in the language of Christ when he instituted the Supper, nor in that of any of the New Testament writers respecting it, to justify the designation of it in this sense as the communion, so is there nothing to sanction it, in the language employed, when the Passover which, as we have seen, prefigured the Christian ordinance, and by which it has been superseded, was appointed. In instituting that ancient Jewish rite God said: "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever." [2] Not the slightest intimation have we here, or elsewhere, that the Passover was to be observed as a feast of mutual recognition and fellowship, or that it was ever celebrated as such. It was to be "a feast to the Lord," not a feast to themselves; a feast in grateful commemoration of God's goodness to them, not a feast of social enjoyment and

[1] "Curtis on Communion," pp. 80, 81. [2] Exod. 12 : 14.

of mutual recognition of each other's claims to regard. Presumptive evidence of great value certainly this is that the Christian Passover, the Supper of the Lord, to which the former feast constantly referred, and in which it has been merged, is to be regarded as a rite, not of communion, but of commemoration.

VII

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST

The only passage in the Bible that might seem in any degree to favor the naming of the Lord's Supper "the communion" is that in which the apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, twice in close connection, employs the term *κοινωνία*. He says, as rendered in our common English version: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (*κοινωνία*) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (*κοινωνία*) of the body of Christ?" [1]

But this passage, in which the word is used in argument upon another subject for the purpose of illustration, and we think without the slightest intention of giving name to the Supper—as it was never before or afterward employed by its author or other inspired writers in connection with it—by no means warrants the fixed and almost universal designation in question.

If such an use of a term be enough to fix it as a name upon that in connection with which it is employed, then is there much more reason for calling the contributions to the poor, as well as other demonstrations of Christian sympathy and brotherhood, "the communion" (as, indeed, the contributions for the poor particularly were for some time actually called), than for so calling the Lord's Supper; for the term *κοινωνία* is, with

[1] 1 Cor. 10 : 16.

its cognates, often applied to them,[2] while it is used in connection with that only in the single instance which we have mentioned.

"The true idea of Christian communion," says Robert Hall,[3] "is by no means confined to a joint participation in the Lord's Supper. He who, in the words of the Apostles' Creed, expresses his belief in the communion of saints, adverts to much more than is comprehended in one particular act. In an intelligent assent to that article is comprehended the total of that sympathy and affection, with all its natural expressions and effects, by which the followers of Christ are united in consequence of their union with their Head and of their joint share in the common salvation. The kiss of charity in the Apostolic age, the right hand of fellowship, a share in the oblations of the church, a commendatory epistle attesting the exemplary character of the bearer, uniting in social prayer, the employment of the term brother or sister to denote spiritual consanguinity, were all considered in the purest ages as tokens of communion; a term which is never applied in the New Testament exclusively to the Lord's Supper. When it is used in connection with that rite it is employed not to denote the fellowship of Christians, but the spiritual participation of the body and blood of Christ."

It is often said that the Lord's Supper is called the communion by the apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10 : 16. But this is altogether a mistake. He simply says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (*κοινωνία*, more properly rendered here *the*

[2] See Rom. 15 : 26; 2 Cor. 8 : 4; 9 : 13; Heb. 13 : 16; Rom. 12 : 13; Gal. 6 : 6; Phil. 4 : 14.
[3] "Works," Vol. I, pp. 290, 291.

participation, the partaking) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (*κοινωνία, the participation, the partaking*) of the body of Christ?" The partaking of the symbolic elements used in the celebration of the Supper is expressed by the term *κοινωνία*, but the term is not applied to the rite itself. The partaking of the cup is not the rite of the Lord's Supper. Neither is the partaking of the bread. The bread and the wine are only elements employed in the observance of the rite; the partaking of them, respectively, only separate actions of that observance. They are not, we repeat, the rite itself. Otherwise we have a part equal to the whole, and two rites of communion, that of the cup and that of the bread.

Turretin, the celebrated Genevese theologian, while accepting, as was then as well as now the almost universal and unchallenged custom, the appellation to which we object, admits that the apostle in the passage under consideration did not design to give name to the ordinance. He says, "*Ubi Paulus Coenae,*" etc.: "Where Paul does not properly give this name to the Supper; but he explains the nature and end of that mystery, whilst he says that the sacred symbols are the communion [spiritual participation] of the body and blood of Christ, that is, are appointed to seal to us the communion [spiritual participation] of the body and blood of Christ." [4]

The language of Paul simply implies that participants of the Supper, in rightly receiving the elements

[4] Turretini Opera, Tom. III, *De Sacra Coena,* Quaest. xxi, Edinbrugh Edition.

symbolic of Christ's broken body and shed blood, spiritually and symbolically participate and partake of him, in all the offices and benefits of his redeeming love. Their drinking of the cup, which represents his blood, and eating of the bread, which represents his body, are a participation, a partaking, metaphorically, of the whole Christ, and of all the spiritual benefits secured through his sufferings and death.

The great idea in the apostle's mind to which, as the whole scope and spirit of his argument show, he wished to give all possible prominence was not that persons partaking of the Lord's Supper communed with each other, but that as they, in partaking of it, identified themselves with their divine Lord and participated in all the benefits of his holy religion, so persons feasting in heathen temples identified themselves with their false divinities and participated in all the evils of their false and idolatrous worship. He wished strongly to state this fact, and impressively to illustrate it, by a striking and tender allusion to the observance of the Lord's Supper, and thus effectually to guard his brethren against the idolatrous practices in which some had indulged and which he so deeply deplored.

In the term *κοινωνία*, as here employed by Paul, the idea of appropriation is essentially involved. Now participants of the Lord's Supper do not appropriate each other. But they do by faith appropriate Christ, symbolically, in the reception of the emblems of his body and blood, and through them of what his body and blood represent.

In the conception of the apostle, then, the union and identification enjoyed by participants in the sacred rite

are union and identification, not with each other, but with Christ, with whom, through faith, under the operation of the Holy Spirit, they are brought into such close and intimate relations as that they may be said, as we have seen, symbolically and spiritually to partake of and appropriate him in all his glorious personality, with all the divine benefits which he confers. Paul was too nicely analytical and clear a thinker, and too practically logical so to mix and confuse distinct ideas as, when obviously endeavoring to make prominent the fact of union and fellowship with Christ, to introduce and give prominence to the different and diverting idea of union and fellowship with others. Justly says Robert Hall, that the inspired writers "maintain an extreme precision in the choice of the terms employed to represent religious ordinances." [5]

The rendering "joint participation," so often given to the term *κοινωνία* in the passage under review, is erroneous and misleading. *Κοινωνία*, as here used, does not involve the idea of jointness between those who partake of the sacred emblems. The jointness involved in the signification of the term is, as we have seen, jointness, union, and fellowship between his people and Christ himself, through the symbols of his body and blood, of which they singly, as well as individually and personally, partake.

This is a discrimination of no little importance to the proper interpretation and exposition of the language and the argument of the apostle. It was the erroneous idea that the Lord's Supper was essentially the intercommunion of Christians that, dominating

[5] "Works," Vol. I, p. 369.

the minds of commentators and expositors, led to the wrong rendering referred to. The revised version of the American Bible Union has, instead of "joint participation of the body and blood," "a partaking of the body and blood"; and the Canterbury revision "a communion," or (in the Margin) "a participation" of the body and blood. Robert Hall says: "The cup is the spiritual participation of the blood; the bread, of the body of the crucified Saviour." [6] And Turretin says, "Participation of the symbols is called communion of the body and blood of Christ." [7]

The statement (ver. 17), "For we being many are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread," is simply intended to convey the idea and declare the fact that believers, though many or diverse, partaking spiritually (with a true and living faith) of one or the same bread, are made one, that is, spiritually homogeneous, being assimilated to Christ, and therefore to each other—all alike feeding upon the same spiritual food.

But while spiritual communion with Christ, in the sense above indicated, is involved in the proper observance of the Lord's Supper, as well as in all other acts and exercises of Christian faith and love, that fact by no means furnishes valid argument, as now must be sufficiently obvious, for naming the Lord's Supper "the communion." There was spiritual communion with Christ, even before his incarnation, in the trustful, hopeful, and devout celebration of the feast of the paschal lamb, yet no one ever dreamed of calling the paschal supper "the communion."

[6] "Works," Vol. I, p. 313. [7] Op., Tom. III, p. 336.

Communion with Christ is enjoyed by his people—let us iterate and reiterate the declaration, and give it all possible emphasis—not only in the celebration of the sacred Supper, but in walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord,[8] in the performance of innumerable non-ceremonial acts of devotion—such as the prayer and adoration of devout and loving spirits, in which there is the sweetest converse and communion between Christ and his people; they, with grateful hearts and souls, and with voices attuned to his praise, earnestly and trustingly making known, with thanksgiving, their requests unto him,[9] and he in return making tender and gracious response to them—all involving a mental and spiritual exercise of the intelligent and conscious agent, without which the strictest and most punctilious observance of the Lord's Supper, as well as all other formal acts of worship, however solemn and imposing outwardly, is but a barren, inert, and nugatory thing.

Surely, then, the Supper, however holy, should not usurp and monopolize the character and title which rightly belong to all.

If any one thing within the whole range of our religion might seem to have color of reason for such monopoly, and to be called, par excellence, the communion, it surely is not the outward and formal observance of the Lord's Supper, nor yet the beautiful and blessed rite itself, but the union and interfusion, spiritually, if we may say so, of Christ and his people in such heaven-inspired acts of homage and of worship, as we have indicated, with all their blessed associations

[8] Luke 1 : 6. [9] Phil. 4 : 6.

and concomitants, hallowed spiritual atmosphere, heavenly environment, breathings of the Spirit, in which Jesus, faithfully fulfilling his gracious promise, is personally present with his people. Such is the communion to which the beloved disciple, the apostle John, refers when he says, "Truly our fellowship (*κοινωνία*) is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ," and "we have fellowship one with another." [10]

But, while so many other things share with the Supper communion with Christ, none share with the sacred rite its grand prescribed purpose—the commemoration of him in his sufferings and death. This alone was ordained to be a remembrancer of him and his mighty passion, throughout all lands and among all generations of men. No other is so adapted to subserve this high and glorious end, as no other (not excepting baptism itself) is of such a nature as at once to embody the most important and precious truths of the gospel and, in the most tender and affecting manner, to impress them upon the minds and hearts of men. For the holy rite is to be viewed in its own intrinsic character, as well as in respect to its objective and divinely appointed purpose. In the one aspect it is, with rare simplicity and vividness, pathos and power, representative as well as suggestive of the actual personal sufferings and death of our Lord, and thus of all that they import, the great essential truths of the whole gospel; while in the other it is tenderly and touchingly, and with ineffable impressiveness, commemorative of them and of all that he, as the embodiment and impersonation of the entire system of

[10] 1 John 1 : 3, 7.

salvation, did and said and suffered on behalf of his people.

This being the one grand object and purpose of the holy rite, to which it is divinely adapted, and which, when observed in accordance with its original intention, it so sublimely realizes, surely no other and different design should be suggested by its name. This were not only to divert attention from its great object, but, perhaps, even to supplant it in the minds of men; as, indeed, as we have seen, has actually been, to a great extent, the case, since the error which we so deeply deplore has prevailed.

Jesus instituted the Supper as a memorial of himself. This he distinctly and unequivocally states. But that he instituted it as a demonstration and test of the fellowship of his people with each other he does not state. Such fellowship, we have conceded, might indeed be manifested, incidentally, by their united celebration of the memorial rite, as well as by other acts of united service of their common Lord; but he no more instituted that, than he instituted them, for the specific purpose of such manifestation. Each one had its own appropriate object, in the attainment of which there was, it may be incidentally and naturally, mutual recognition; but such mutual recognition was not the end proposed. Indeed, as we have said, occurring naturally in connection with all these united acts and services, it needed no special rite, nor any particular appointment at all for its realization. So though there be, incidentally and indirectly, recognition and fellowship in the celebration together by Christians of the Lord's Supper, that mutual recognition and fellowship cannot be

rightly spoken of as the object or even, in strictness, as one of the objects of the institution of the rite.

And this reasoning will apply with equal force to fellowship with Christ, as will yet further appear in the closing pages of our next section. The one grand design, purpose, object, of the sacred rite was, and is, *the commemoration of Christ* in his sufferings and death for his people. And it should not be, in any degree, obscured or compromised by confusion with other objects, however important in themselves those objects may be.

VIII

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST (CONTINUED)

To nourish and strengthen the spiritual life of the believer through his communion with Christ in the participation of the emblems of his body and blood, is often insisted upon as an important office of the Lord's Supper. "As in baptism," says Abraham Booth, "we profess to have received spiritual life, so in communicating at the Lord's table, we have the emblems of the heavenly food by which we live, by which we grow, and by which we hope to live forever. And as we are born of God but once, so we are baptized but once; but, as our spiritual life is maintained by the continued agency of divine grace, and the comfort of it enjoyed by the hallowed exercise of faith in the dying Redeemer, so it is our duty and privilege frequently to receive the holy Supper. Hence theological writers have often called baptism the sacrament of *regeneration,* or of *initiation,* and the Lord's Supper the sacrament of *nutrition.*" [1]

Speaking of the sacred Supper, the celebrated Isaac Barrow says, somewhat quaintly: "It is a holy feast, a spiritual repast, a divine entertainment, to which God in his kindness invites us; to which, if we come with well-disposed minds, he there feeds us with most holy and delicious viands, with heavenly manna, with

[1] "Vindication of the Baptists," abridged edition, pp. 28, 29.

most reviving and cherishing liquor. Bread is the staff of life, the most common, most necessary, and most wholesome and savory meat; wine is the most pleasant and wholesome, also the most sprightly and cordial drink; by them, therefore, our Lord chose to represent that body and blood, by the oblation of which a capacity of life and health was procured to mankind; the taking in which by right apprehension, tasting by hearty faith, digesting it by careful attention and meditation, converting it into our substance by devout, grateful, and holy affections, joined with serious and steady resolution of living answerable thereto, will certainly support and maintain our spiritual life in a vigorous health and happy growth of grace; refreshing our hearts with comfort and satisfaction unspeakable." [2]

Referring to this spiritual repast, Doctor Curtis says: "As every one needs bread daily; as the bread he eats nourishes his body, becomes indeed incorporated into and part of it; as the wine he imbibes sustains him, so do we imbibe the spirit of Christ and feed upon him, our souls being nourished and supported by his grace and his doctrine, especially that of his atoning sacrifice. It is the death of Christ for our sins, which is the great sustenance of our hopes and life as Christians." [3]

That the nourishing and strengthening of the spiritual life of all who worthily partake of it, is one of the great benefits resulting from the observance of the Lord's Supper, is argued from the words of Christ at its institution: "And as they were eating, Jesus took

[2] "Works," Vol. III, p. 48. [3] "Communion," pp. 76, 77.

bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." [4]

Further evidence still, it is urged, is found in those remarkable words of our Lord in the sixth chapter of John, in which, even if there be no special reference by Christ to the observance of the holy rite afterward to be instituted, but only to himself, in his whole sacrificial and redeeming work, the principle under consideration is thought to be involved: "Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." [5]

Of these highly figurative words of Christ, when taken in their whole scope, and especially in connection with what he says in explanation of them, in answer to the objections of many of his disciples, the real spiritual import is readily apprehended by every earnest and discriminating mind. "It is the spirit," he tells

[4] Matt. 26 : 26-28. [5] John 6 : 53-58.

them, "that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."[6] Because it is "spirit," and because it is "life," the divine word always nourishes and strengthens the spiritual life of the believer. It is the bread of life and the water of life, of which he that eats and drinks shall live forever. Christ, the incarnation of the Supreme Spirit and the Supreme Life, is the absolute, eternal Word, the substance of all truth. He who by faith receives him, receives all truths in one; receives them, so to speak, concentrated and condensed in their very extract and essence.

Olshausen, commenting upon the foregoing extraordinary utterances of our Lord, and their supposed relation to the sacred Supper, says: "It would, indeed, undoubtedly seem inappropriate that the Saviour should speak of a rite before its institution, so that no one could understand the subject of his discourse, but it may be safely concluded that the Christ had, at an earlier period, touched upon the idea from which the rite afterward arose. That idea is no other than this: that Jesus is the principle of life and nourishment to the new regenerate man, not merely for his soul and his spirit, but also for his glorified body. As this principle of life he offers himself, and gives himself especially in his death; hence the mention here, verse 51 (as in the institution of the Supper), of his death, although this is by no means to be deemed the main point of the whole passage."[7]

"It is plain," says the distinguished Doctor Dick, referring to our Lord's remarkable language, "that he

[6] John 6 : 63. [7] "Comm.," Vol. II, pp. 416, 417.

spoke of the benefits which were to result to the human race from his death, and of the spiritual participation of them by faith; for he says: 'He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.'" [8]

"The Son of God," says Doctor Edgar, "suspended the possession of eternal life on the eating of his flesh, and the drinking of his blood. This was the condition, without which man could have no life. None can possess spiritual life unless, in this sense, they eat and drink his body and blood. The manducation mentioned by the apostle is necessary for salvation." [9]

"Our church, it is true," said the Episcopal Bishop Hopkins, in his refutation of Milner, "does not employ the phrase 'real presence' lest it might be misapprehended, but she declares distinctly that the faithful receiver of the eucharistic sacrament does verily and indeed receive Christ's body and blood, in a heavenly and spiritual manner, through faith; while she utterly and absolutely rejects and protests against the gross, sensuous, and idolatrous dogma of transubstantiation. This presence of Christ she holds to be real, that is true, and none the less real because it is spiritual, but rather the more so, since it is the divine nourishment of the soul which, being spiritual in its nature, could not be strengthened by a partaking of actual flesh and blood." [10]

The eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood of Christ, in the sense which he intended in the sixth chapter of John, and which, obviously, is not confined

[8] "Lect. on Theol.," Vol. II, p. 397.
[9] "Variations of Popery," p. 388.
[10] "Milner's 'End of Controversy' Controverted," Hopkins, Vol. II, p. 173.

to participation of the Lord's Supper, if indeed Christ there makes any reference to the rite at all, are indeed necessary to the existence, development, and support of the divine life in man. Without such "manducation," man famishes and dies of spiritual inanition. Christ is the absolute and infinite life. His body and blood represent the substance and vital principle of his whole being. He who by faith properly receives and properly appropriates them, receives and appropriates the whole Christ with all his divine benefits. But, as the common sense, natural sentiment, and reason of men, all utterly recoil from the bare idea of a literal physical feeding upon him, so the whole spirit and genius of the gospel make it certain that the partaking of himself, to which Christ referred, is to be regarded in a purely symbolical and spiritual sense. He is partaken of metaphorically and spiritually, not only in the reception of the bread and wine of the sacred Supper, emblematic of his body broken and his blood shed; but in every act and observance of Christian faith and love. In the latter view the myriads and millions of the redeemed have all eaten of his flesh and drunk of his blood. In the former not one of the glorious throng has been guilty of the horrid, revolting, impossible act; maugre all the metaphysical subtleties, audacious assumptions, blasphemous asseverations of the self-stultified advocates of transubstantiation. The Spirit, not the flesh, has quickened.

There is nothing talismanic, no natural or spiritual magic, in the Lord's Supper. If the partaking of it profits the participant, as it doubtless always does, when he worthily partakes of it, it is only as any

genuine Christian exercise whatever profits. Some acts of service are objective, and bless, reflexively, those who perform them; others, like prayer and praise, involve an essentially subjective exercise, in which his people have immediate fellowship with Christ formed in them, "the hope of glory."

Conscientious observance of all the divine ordinances, faithful obedience to all the divine commands, upbuilds and strengthens, as well as disciplines and trains, the child of God. Thanksgiving and prayer, praise, and all other acts of worship and of service give a healthful spiritual exercise, necessary to the growth and full development of the "new creature in Christ Jesus." The believer's spiritual health and strength are determined by the faithfulness with which he walks in all the divine ordinances and commandments. Many a one's spiritual life is weakened and withered by long refusal to yield to the teachings of God's word, and the monitions of his own conscience, respecting baptism. At length, obeying, he is revitalized, blooms in spiritual freshness and beauty, and brings forth abundant fruit. So it is in regard to the Lord's Supper. Nothing more distinctly marks the commencement and progress of religious declension, with respect to which it is both effect and cause, than the neglect of this blessed ordinance. On the other hand, he who pants after God "as the hart panteth after the water brooks," whose soul yearns for divine fellowship, "cries out for God, for the living God," and who never fails to avail himself of every opportunity of enjoying him, is spiritually healthy, robust and vigorous, useful and happy.

There is a vast deal of deeply damaging and destructive error connected with this whole matter; error involving the unphilosophical, as well as unscriptural, principle inhering in the glory of baptismal regeneration, with all its kindred fallacies. Both baptism and the Lord's Supper, in their essential nature and design, are perfectly plain and simple ordinances, as one would naturally expect them to be, in view of the character of God and the circumstances and necessities of men. But both have been confused and mystified and grossly perverted through the folly and superstition, the selfishness and ambition of men.

Partaking of the bread and wine, emblematic of the body and blood of Jesus, as all intuitively see and instinctively feel, cannot possibly be a real, literal feeding upon his person. In itself, a purely physical and corporeal action, the partaking of the mere material emblems of Christ's body broken and his blood shed, can, in itself, have no direct and proper effect upon spiritual substance, the very counter pole of being, and can, therefore, only be symbolic of the soul's reception and appropriation of his benefits in the exercise of its own proper spiritual functions. We can be no more spiritually nourished by the mere bread and wine of the Lord's Supper than we can be spiritually cleansed by the waters of baptism. The observance of both rites profits, as we have said, just as, and only as, the performance, under divine guidance and inspiration, of any other Christian duty does, by cultivating the spirit of faith, love, obedience, zeal, and all the elements and graces of Christian character, and so bringing us into union and communion with our divine Lord. But it

goes no farther than this. As the value of submission to the ordinance of baptism does not consist in the putting away of the filth of the flesh by its cleansing and purifying waters, but in the answer of a good conscience toward God; so the value of the observance of the Lord's Supper does not consist in the weak and famishing nature's deriving sustenance and strength from the bread, stimulus and exhilaration from the wine of that ordinance, but in the believing and loving soul's deriving spiritual sustenance and strength, stimulus and exhilaration, from the exercise of the spiritual affections, communings with its divine Lord, and the sweet sense of duty done, in the faithful observance of a divinely appointed rite.

But, if the spiritual nourishment and growth of the believer, through personal participation of the emblems of the body and blood of Jesus and all that they import, in the celebration of the sacred Supper, be an end so important as has been claimed, it yet yields in importance to the higher one which our Lord had specially in view, which he announced with so great distinctness and with so much tenderness urged upon his disciples when he instituted the blessed rite, that of a grateful, loving, loyal commemoration of himself, his sufferings and death, with all that he and they involve.

However sweet and profitable the believer's personal communion with Christ, in the worthy observance of the Supper, and however important in itself such communion may be, yet, as that is not the great object of the rite, to give it a name implying that it is, is both logically and practically, morally and religiously wrong, as well as in contravention of a sound scrip-

tural interpretation. So to name it, as the whole history of the rite abundantly shows, is not unattended with evil, evil of the most serious character. It is an error, a great error, and error, whether great or small, is never harmless.

"Every man," says Archbishop Trench, "who has himself in any degree cared for the truth, and occupied himself in seeking it, is more or less aware how much of the falsehood in the world passes current under the concealment of words; how many strifes and controversies

Which feed the simple, and offend the wise,

find all or nearly all the fuel that maintains them, in words carelessly or dishonestly employed. . . Ask, then, words what they mean, that you may deliver yourselves, that you may help to deliver others from the tyranny of words; and, to use Baxter's excellent phrase, from the strife of 'word-warriors.' Learn to distinguish between them, for you have the authority of Hooker, that the mixture of these things by speech, which by nature are divided, is the mother of all error." [11]

The great error in question, in connection with kindred ones, opens the way to the most hurtful superstitions and extravagances. Witness the Romish "transubstantiation," and the Lutheran "consubstantiation," the kindred conceits of Puseyism, the blasphemous and idolatrous mummeries, as well as deadly errors of the "mass," and all the gross absurdities connected with the rite, as supposed by so many

[11] "Study of Words," pp. 293, 294.

"ritualists" and "sacramentarians," to possess the mystical and marvelous virtues of an inexplicable *opus operatum.* Witness too, the errors both of theory and of practice, even among many who are not Papists, or Puseyists, or Lutherans, and whom we should be unwilling to class generally with "sacramentarians" or "ritualists." Misapprehending the grand design, and grossly exaggerating the intrinsic efficacy of the rite, they sometimes administer it, as a means of grace, to the impenitent and unbelieving; and (as would seem, with an idea, more or less vague, of its possessing in itself something of saving virtue) as a means of salvation to the sick and the dying.

IX

GRAND OBJECT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

But, apart from all that we have said, it is evident that communion with Christ, however involved in proper participation of the Lord's Supper, was not, any more than the intercommunion of believers, the great primary purpose of the appointment of the sacred feast—seeing that, without the rite, such communion, through simple faith alone, might and would have been enjoyed. That great primary purpose, the one grand object of the rite, we affirm and reaffirm, iterate and reiterate, was the commemoration of Christ in his sufferings and death, with all that they import, on behalf of his people. Everything else connected with it, however important in itself, is inferior to that one grand end; an end in itself of the greatest significance, and in its outward bearings of the utmost moment to the whole world.

While the Son of God was on earth he displayed his humanity as conspicuously as his divinity. There constantly glowed in his heart the sweetest and most beautiful human affections. He tenderly loved his disciples. And he yearned for their love in return. He would never forget them. He would have them ever remember himself. It was just before the hour arrived, when he was to be separated from them by a death of violence and outward ignominy, when they were about to cele-

brate together for the last time the feast which found in him a demonstration and fulfilment of its divine import, that he said to his apostles: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." [1] O human and divine Heart! who may measure the height and depth, and length and breadth of thine exceeding love and sympathy in that pregnant and trying hour!

Having finished with his chosen ones the divinely appointed feast of his and their nation, for which he had so intensely longed, he at once instituted the richer and far more important one which was to be the heritage of all nations, the perpetual reminder of a greater deliverance than that of the firstborn of Israel, when the firstborn of Egypt were slain; a precious remembrance of the great Deliverer himself to all generations of mankind.

But, though he instituted the Supper as a memorial, most touching, of himself, it was designed for a far higher purpose than any mere personal consideration could suggest, dear as that may have been to his warm and susceptible human heart. Though it has been truly said that "Christ was ever his own theme," and never failed to magnify himself, as well as his office, he was the most unselfish and least ambitious of beings. His self-abnegation was perfect. He pleased not himself. He sought not his own glory. It was for the benefit of his people, and of the whole lost, ruined world, infinitely more than for the satisfying of his own per-

[1] Luke 22 : 15, 16.

sonal yearning for their continued love and unfailing remembrance, that he would have them constantly commemorate himself and his redeeming work. Such commemoration would be productive of incalculable benefits to the whole human race. It would put the great truths respecting his character and work, his sufferings and death into a concrete and compact form, far more affecting and impressive than any mere abstract statement of them could be. It would concentrate and condense the great saving truths of the gospel into a beautiful and simple rite, which would outwardly appeal to the senses, powerfully impress the imagination, arouse, and excite, and keep alive the sweetest sympathies, the noblest sentiments of the soul. "In the sacrament of the Supper," says the German theologian Knapp, "the most important truths of Christianity, which we commonly only hear or read, are visibly set before us, made cognizable to the senses, and exhibited in such a way as powerfully to move the feelings and make an indelible impression on the memory. Hence this sacrament is justly called *verbum Dei visibile,* "the visible word of God." Some of the most weighty doctrines of religion, which are commonly taught us by audible words, through the outward ear, are here inculcated by external visible signs and actions." [2]

The substance and spirit, indeed, of the whole gospel, enshrined in this divine rite of the commemoration, in connection with its kindred rite of baptism, would be preserved, as other distinguished writers have remarked, by the intelligent and appropriate observance of them,

[2] "Christian Theol.," p. 506.

even if the rest of the recorded gospel were lost. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, till he come." "The Supper," says the distinguished author just quoted, "was designed to be a perpetual sermon on the death of Christ, until he shall come again, to bring his followers into the kingdom of the blessed." [3] The death of the Lord is the great, all-inclusive fact of the whole system of salvation, from which all its principles may be deduced. Others have come into the world to live and to enjoy. Not so Jesus. He came to be "a man of sorrows and grief's acquaintance." The grand end of his mission into the world was, not to live a noble human and divine life, not formally to teach men, not to set before them a high and inspiring example, but—to die. "The greatest thing," says President Edwards, "that Christ did in the execution of his priestly office, and the greatest thing that he ever did, and the greatest thing that ever was done, was the offering up himself a sacrifice to God. Herein he was the antitype of all that had been done by the priests, and in all their sacrifices and offerings, from the beginning of the world." [4]

It was to set forth this great fact, in all its fulness and in all its bearings, that Moses in the law and the prophets wrote. To it point all the types and shadows; to it refer all the rites and ceremonies; by it are made clear and significant all the institutions of Judaism. The illustration and enforcement of this sublime fact was the end of all the preachings, teachings, writings, labors of the apostles and their coadjutors.

[3] "Christian Theol.," p. 499.
[4] Edwards' Works, "Hist. Red.," Vol. I, p. 409.

The proper observance, therefore, of the rite embodying this great, all-embracing fact, its celebration throughout all lands, and in all generations, would give the light of life to all people. "Sensible impressions are much more powerful than those which are made on the understanding. This truth is probably neither so fully nor so deeply realized in any religious ordinance as the Lord's Supper. The breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the wine exhibit the sacrifice of Christ with a force, a liveliness of representation, confessed by all Christians at all times, and, indeed, by most others also; and unrivaled in its efficacy, even by the Passover itself. All the parts of this service are perfectly simple, and are contemplated by the mind without the least distraction or labor. The symbols are exact and most lively portraits of the affecting Original, and present to us the crucifixion and the sufferings of the great Subject of it as again undergone before our eyes. We are not barely taught; we see, and hear, and in consequence feel, that Christ, our Passover, was slain for us, and died on the cross that we might live. As this event, more interesting to mankind than any other which has ever occurred, is thus clearly presented to us in this ordinance, so those doctrines of the Christian system, which are most intimately connected with it, are here exhibited with a corresponding clearness. Particularly the atonement, which this divine Person thus accomplished for mankind, is here seen in the strongest light. With similar certainty is that depraved character of man, which is here expiated, unfolded to our view; the impossibility of our justification by works of law; our free justifica-

tion by the grace of God, through faith in the blood of Christ; and, generally, the whole scheme of reconciling apostate man to his offended Creator." [5]

With this great purpose in view, of presenting the substance of the gospel succinctly and graphically to the very eye of the world—a purpose infinitely above all others connected with it—was the holy Supper instituted and commanded to be universally and perpetually observed as a memorial of its divine Author and of his great sacrificial and saving work.

In presence of that grand purpose, how little seem all others! In comparison with it, how insignificant even the sweet communion of believers with each other in all true Christian service!—a holy exercise of soul, by no means to be disparaged, but which our human and carnal spirit of self-exaggeration is prone sometimes to invest with an undue sacredness, and to raise to a prominence to which it is not entitled.

[5] Dwight's "Theology," Vol. IV, pp. 356, 357.

PART II

LAW OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

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We have seen that communion of Christians and the formal ceremonial commemoration of Christ are very different things, and by no means coextensive; that the former is broader than the latter, and does not necessarily involve it; that the one is a general internal condition and state of the soul, while the other is only a particular outward action; not different, as such, from a thousand other outward actions of believers, which are never thought of as tests of mutual recognition and fellowship, each one being performed under the dictates of conscience, and a conceded right of private judgment, according to its own law; conformity to which measures and determines duty in respect to every institution of Christ.

What, then, in its various provisions, is the law governing the celebration of the Lord's Supper? Let us endeavor to ascertain and, as briefly and plainly as may be, to state it. In the light of what has already been established, we are now prepared to do this with a clearness and completeness otherwise impracticable. And this fact, we think, strikingly illustrates and enforces the validity of our argument and the great practical importance of the position which it maintains and makes good.

From the facts and principles set forth in the preceding discussion, in which the Lord's Supper has been constantly regarded as primarily and essentially a feast

in commemoration of Christ and his passion, and subordinately a feast symbolic of spiritual nutrition and refreshment to those who worthily partake of it, the law of this divine rite in its simple but comprehensive provisions may be readily determined.

I

ITS PROPER PARTICIPANTS

Having for its grand object the commemoration by his people of their adored Lord in his sufferings and death on their behalf, and symbolizing their spiritual nourishment and growth in the reception of the bread and wine, emblematic of his body and blood, it is obvious that they only can properly partake of it. They alone enjoy the supreme benefits of Christ's great sacrifice. They alone have a true appreciation of it, a real and abiding interest in it. And they alone, as those who have been born again, created anew in Christ Jesus, and thus endowed with pure spiritual tastes and appetencies, are prepared to take delight in, and to derive profit from, the divine repast. For these reasons they alone are qualified intelligently and heartily to celebrate it. With all others its observance is necessarily nothing more than an outward and lifeless formality, a heartless and profitless ceremonial.

But to be more specific and particular, we remark that the proper participants of the Lord's Supper are:

1. *Genuine believers.* Such were the constituents of the first church, the church of the apostles, to whom the holy rite was first administered. Believers alone supremely love and loyally obey Christ, striving earnestly and habitually to "walk in all his ordinances and commandments blameless." "The carnal mind is enmity

against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be." [1] Having been renewed in the spirit of their minds, and made partakers of the divine nature, believers are no longer supremely carnal. They have that spiritual sense by which spiritual things are discerned and appreciated. Only such can appropriate and receive profit from the spiritual nutriment furnished at the sacred feast. To all others it would be unsuited, unsavory, and injurious. "The blood which goes into the lungs a dark, inert mass, poisoned with carbonic acid, comes from them of a bright scarlet, having parted with its poison, and absorbed the oxygen of the atmosphere. It is thus vitalized and made capable of sustaining life. So in the gospel the sacraments need to be vitalized by a living faith, in the experience of each professor, without which they only carry with them poison and death into every ramification of the spiritual system to which they extend." [2]

As we have intimated in another place, some have recommended the holy rite as a means of grace to the unregenerate and the unbelieving. Others, with a vague and mystical notion of a certain saving or semi-saving efficacy as connected with the rite, have administered it, we have also seen, as the means of salvation to the sick and the dying, and to those in health who are seeking the salvation of their souls. Both these classes of teachers wholly misconceive the real nature and design of the ordinance and utterly pervert it. Neither reason nor Scripture sanctions their teachings; both, indeed, altogether repudiate and condemn them. Such teachings may be prompted by zeal, but it is "zeal

[1] Rom. 8 : 7. [2] Curtis, "Progress of Baptist Principles," p. 74.

without knowledge." They may be inspired by humane and generous feeling, but it is feeling neither generated nor guided by a just appreciation of divine truth, nor by a proper estimate of man's essential character and real condition.

Though in another place he teaches, with strange inconsistency, a different doctrine, the German theologian Knapp, speaking of the Supper as "a significant sermon on the death of Jesus," is constrained, by the force of truth, which he manifestly loves, and which, for the most part, he ably advocates, to say that the Supper "requires, in order to a proper celebration of it, a personal experience of the benefits of this death." [3]

The Lord's Supper, though involving the use of physical elements, is a spiritual rite. What congeniality, then, can the carnal heart have with it? What susceptibility of impression by it? What power of appreciation and appropriation of its benefits? Can the mere material substances of bread and wine received by the dying unbeliever alter his spiritual character or state? Can these substances received by the carnal man, whether sick or in health, inspire the heart that is enmity against God with a true and supreme love for him? What talismanic power of matter over mind, surpassing all the wonders of Greek or Arabian fiction, were this! What a marvelous *opus operatum!*—that wonder-working figment of ignorance and superstition, that name with no answering thing, that shadow of no proper substance; "chimera dire," shedding baleful and blighting influence on everything within its range, which Robert Hall calls "the opprobrium

[3] "Christ. Theol.," p. 499.

of the Romish Church," and which, with his usual felicity of expression, he thus defines and characterizes: "The Church of Rome attributes the highest spiritual benefits to certain corporeal actions or ceremonies, independent of the character and disposition of the performer. For example, she believes that the ceremony of baptism secures to the unconscious infant, by its intrinsic efficacy, the infusion of regenerating grace, without regard to the intention or disposition of the parties concerned; and that the element of bread in the sacrament operates in the same manner in procuring the pardon and augmenting the grace of the communicant. Hence the members of that church lay little stress on the exercise of faith and the cultivation of holy dispositions, compared to the dependence they place on "bodily exercises, on masses, penances, auricular confessions, and a multitude of external observances which form the substance of their religion. Consistent Protestants, on the contrary, while they conscientiously attend to every positive institute, according to the measure of their light, look upon the few and simple ceremonies of the gospel as incapable of affording the smallest benefit, apart from the dispositions and intentions with which they are performed; agreeably to the doctrine of our Saviour, who tells us that 'God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.' To expatiate on the incalculable mischiefs which have arisen from this doctrine is foreign to our purpose; suffice it to remark that it is held in just detestation by all enlightened Christians." [4]

[4] Hall's "Works," Vol. I, pp. 433, 434.

Persons having the character and qualifications which have been indicated, in order to be rightful participants of the Lord's Supper, must also be:

2. *Members of the visible church.* Whilst it is clear, from the essential nature and design of the Lord's Supper, that only the real followers of Christ are entitled to the privileges of the sacred feast, it is also clear from the simple scriptural account which we have given of its first celebration, that it is designed for them even only in an organized or church capacity. Jesus instituted the Supper—the Christian Passover—just before his crucifixion, with his family, his apostles, who were also his church, and the nucleus of the church of Jerusalem. The old covenant, decaying and waxing old, vanished away with all its types and shadows, rites and ceremonies, and the new covenant took its place. The feast of the paschal lamb, no more to be celebrated, passed and faded as a shadow. The substance had come, the real and true lamb, the Lamb of God. The great memorial rite of the old dispensation was merged into and absorbed by the great memorial rite of the new. Having celebrated that, according to its law, with his family, the apostles, he celebrated this, according to its law, with them as his church. The apostles, as a sort of close corporation, have sometimes been called the college of apostles. We have no objection to the term. They were a college and, as we have said, they were a family. But that college, that family, was also a church. It was the first church, the church instituted and constituted by Christ himself, and over which he personally presided. Its constituents were his ἐκκλησία, his small, but divinely honored assembly,

called out by himself from the rest of men to be about him, to worship him, to observe his ordinances, to transact the business pertaining to his kingdom, to establish it, and to extend it throughout the world.

Having adduced weighty and conclusive evidence to prove that the apostles had been previously baptized, Wiberg says: "That the eleven, at the institution of the Supper, composed a Christian church is also certain. By a church of Christ is meant, according to the Augsburg Confession, Art. Seventh, 'a congregation of holy persons, in which the gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered.' Now we ask, was not the gospel rightly taught by our Lord and Master? Were not the disciples rightly baptized, and did they not receive the true Supper from its Institutor? As this cannot be denied, it follows that the Supper, even on this occasion, was celebrated in common by a regular church of Christ." [5]

There were other disciples besides the apostles; "above five hundred brethren at once" saw Jesus, immediately after his resurrection, Paul tells us.[6] But they were not formally connected with the apostles, as an organized body, a church. Those disciples loved their Lord. Many of them would have died for him. But they were, as yet, unorganized and without the pale of the church visible. Hence they were not at the Supper. Not even Mary, the mother of Jesus, nor the other holy women who so devoutly and lovingly administered to him, nor the seraphic Stephen, probably already a believer,[7] and soon after sealing his glorious

[5] "Christ. Baptism," pp. 295, 296. [6] 1 Cor. 15 : 6.
[7] Epiphanius, it is said, with whom Fleming, in his "Christology," agrees, regarded him as one of the Seventy.

testimony with his blood, to follow his divine Lord into his heavenly kingdom.

Subsequently these disciples were organized by union with the church of the apostles, which constituted with them the church at Jerusalem. Then, at once, as formal and regular members of the church, they partook of the Supper of the Lord, sitting at his "table" "breaking bread," and commemorating with the apostles his sufferings and death in the manner and for the purpose which he had prescribed. They assembled on the first day of the week, and on other occasions—daily, indeed, at first—to worship him, and to partake of the bread which represented his body bruised and broken for them, and of the wine which symbolized his blood shed on their behalf.

We never, however, read of a portion of them, whether large or small, coming together apart from the organized body, the church proper, to celebrate the Supper. It was not then, nor is it now, competent for two, or ten, half a hundred, or more professed believers, casually coming together, to improvise, if we may so say, a celebration of the holy rite. Neither was it then, nor is it now, competent for the administrators of the rite to give the holy Supper to individuals or companies of their brethren, apart from the church—or a regularly assembled quorum of the church. Its dignity, as a rite of the church, was not and is not thus to be violated, or in any degree to be compromised.

Referring to the account given of the Lord's Supper by those early Fathers, Justin and Irenæus, and to the origin of the practice, by private parties and by individuals absent from the formal celebration of the rite

by the church, of partaking of "elements previously consecrated" in the church, Neander says: "The idea at the bottom was that a communion could properly have its right significance only in the midst of a church; the communion of persons absent, of individuals, was to be considered therefore as only a continuation of that communion of the whole body of the church." [8]

As in the observance of the Jewish Passover, of which, as we have seen, the Lord's Supper is the antitype, members of other Jewish families might be, for the time, incorporated with the family celebrating it; so in the observance of the Lord's Supper the church celebrating it may, for the time, incorporate with itself members of other churches of "the same faith and order." Persons not conforming to this faith and order, and therefore not qualified for membership, even though they may have been baptized, could not be thus incorporated with the church and received as proper participants with it of the Supper, any more than persons who may have been circumcised (as some of the Gentile communities were), but who were not of the nation of Israel, could partake with the Israelites of the Passover. Such persons, although baptized, are debarred as not "walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless," from even temporary incorporation with the church, and so incapable of even quasi-membership, through Christian comity and courtesy, and of the enjoyment of the privileges of the church. They are, in this respect, like those who were once members and, of course, baptized,

[8] "Hist. Chris. Rel. and Church," Vol. I, p. 332, note.

but from whom fellowship has been withdrawn, whose membership has lapsed, and who, therefore, until formally and regularly restored, are disqualified for participation with the church in the celebration of the sacred Supper, as well as for the enjoyment of all the other privileges of the church.

Christ, Creator and Upholder of all things, has established perfect system and order throughout his vast material realm, and they are always maintained. Can anything less be expected in his more glorious spiritual realm? Having established a sublime, however simple and outwardly humble, rite, to be observed by his people throughout all generations in loving memory of himself and of his great atoning work, he left it not without fixed and clearly defined law, that it might be protected from neglect and corruption, irregularity and disorder.

Having seen that, in consonance with the nature and design of the Lord's Supper, the true people of God, genuine believers, are the only rightful participants of it, and that even they, as isolated individuals, or loose, unorganized, promiscuous companies, cannot properly partake of it, but can do so in an orderly and decorous manner, according to the teachings of Christ and his apostles, only as an organized body or church, we learn from the same divine teaching who are the proper constituents of such a body, and therefore qualified and entitled to partake of the sacred Supper. They are not only believers, but

3. *Baptized believers.* They are those who, having with a true faith accepted Christ, have publicly confessed him and assumed the outward posture and rela-

tions, with the essential inward character, of his friends and followers; those who, wearing the badge of the Christian brotherhood, the uniform of the soldiery of the great Captain, have "put him on in baptism," and thus openly and formally taken position in his ranks; those, in a word, who, upon a credible profession of faith, have been baptized into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and thus become members of his church. Such were the first participants of the rite, the constituents of the first church, the church of the apostles.

The church of Christ is spoken of in the New Testament as a body of which he is the head, and of which he is also the informing soul. Indeed, the union between him and his people is regarded as so close and intimate that they are constantly represented as one. They are assimilated to him, spiritually homogeneous with him, have his mind, breathe his spirit. Having been "accepted in the Beloved," they are loyal to him as their King, obedient to him as their Master, faithful to him as their Friend. Such were those who composed the church personally constituted by Christ himself, and of which he was the divine Pastor. They gave every evidence that was possible of their devotion and consecration to him. They left all and followed him; they encountered hardship and toil for him; they did lovingly and loyally all that he bade them do; they braved persecution, peril, and death for him.

John, the harbinger of Jesus, had bidden men repent and be baptized, believing on him who was to come. Multitudes obeyed him. Some of the apostles, as is generally conceded, were of the number, and there

is reason for believing that others, if not all, were. Robert Hall, speaking of the apostles in connection with this matter, though denying, as we think, wrongly, that John's and Christian baptism were identical, says: "It is almost certain that some, probably most of them, had been baptized by John." [9]

But if any of them immediately obeyed not John, there is still no reason to question the fact of their baptism. We know that Christ himself submitted to baptism at the hands of John, saying, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness"; that he preached substantially as John preached; that he everywhere commanded men, not only to repent and believe the gospel, but also to be baptized; and that he, through his disciples, actually administered the rite to great multitudes, to more even than did John. Would he fail to urge upon his chosen and most highly favored ones the sacred duties he so strenuously enjoined upon others? Or would they who had shown, as we have seen, such wondrous devotion resist his will in respect to any of his injunctions, and especially while so earnestly pressing those injunctions upon others, as they all unquestionably did? No one can believe it. He bade all men repent, believe, and be baptized. He said to his apostles, in giving them the Great Commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." [10] Or, as it is rendered by Mark: "Go ye into all the world,

[9] Hall's "Works," Vol. I, p. 303. [10] Matt. 28 : 19, 20.

and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." [11] Now the principle of the commission as it respects baptism was ever the same. It applied before the annunciation of that great charter, as well as after it, at the beginning of Christ's ministry, as well as at its close. It bound the earlier disciples of Jesus, as well as those of a later day. None accepted and submitted to the will of their divine Lord, whether formally or informally expressed, with greater alacrity than did the apostles. None were practically wiser than they. And emulating their divine Lord himself in this matter, they would not fail to add to the force of their precepts respecting baptism the weight of their own example.

"When our Lord himself," says Wiberg, "submitted to baptism in order to 'fulfil all righteousness'; when he at the same time declared that his followers, together with him, ought to fulfil the same righteousness, or all the several appointments of the heavenly Father; when he too declared that baptism was a part of the 'counsel of God,' and expressed his sore displeasure with such as 'rejected this counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of John' (Luke 7 : 30); when John the Baptist 'was sent from God to make ready a people prepared for the Lord' (Luke 1 : 17; John 1 : 6), and for this purpose 'baptized with the baptism of repentance' (Acts 19 : 4); when the first disciples of Christ also had been the disciples of John (John 1 : 37; Acts 1 : 22); and when they themselves, on the command of our Saviour, baptized

[11] Mark 16 : 15, 16.

others—is it indeed conceivable that they would have neglected or refused to be baptized?" [12]

The objection sometimes urged that the baptism of John, and even that of Christ himself (through his disciples), was not Christian baptism, has always seemed to us most singular and unreasonable and utterly without weight. Dagg, speaking of this matter, says: "The first Supper was administered to the apostles. Some of these had been baptized by John; and since the disciples made by Jesus in his personal ministry were also baptized, we are warranted to conclude that all the apostles had been baptized. If it be denied that John's baptism and the baptism administered under the immediate direction of Christ during his personal ministry were Christian baptism, we call for proof. . . When Paul was made an apostle, before he entered on his work, he was commanded to be baptized. From some cause the other apostles were not under this obligation. We account for the difference by the supposition that they had already received what was substantially the same as the baptism administered to Paul." [13]

To the same purport is the language of the distinguished German theologian Knapp, whom we have already, in other connections, several times cited. "The practice of the first Christian church," says he, "confirms the point that the baptism of John was considered essentially the same with Christian baptism. For those who acknowledged that they had professed, by the baptism of John, to believe in Jesus as the Christ, and

[12] "Christ. Bapt.," pp. 294, 295.
[13] "Manual of Theology," Part II, pp. 214, 215.

who, in consequence of this, had become in fact his disciples and had believed in him, were not in a single instance baptized again into Christ, because this was considered as having been already done. Hence we do not find that any apostle, or other disciple of Jesus, was the second time baptized; not even that Apollos mentioned in Acts 18 : 25, because he had before believed in Jesus as Christ, although he had received only the baptism of John." [14]

The baptism of the "three thousand" on the day of Pentecost, "among whom were many whom John had baptized, but who had not then recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and had even taken part in his crucifixion," is not inconsistent with the foregoing statement of Knapp. Nor is the rebaptism of "the Twelve," mentioned in Acts 19 : 1-7. They had probably been baptized "unto John's baptism," after Christ's had superseded John's; or, if not so, there was doubtless some other irregularity or informality by which their first baptism was invalidated.

To the above cited authorities of the highest class, which might be increased indefinitely, we add the great name of Turretin, whose works are amongst the ablest of the learned productions of the seventeenth century, and a standard in some of our best theological institutions. He maintains, with great learning and force of argument that "the baptism of John was the same essentially with that of Christ," or Christian baptism.[15]

Thus we see that the members of Christ's first church, as constituted by himself, were all baptized

[14] "Christ. Theol.," p. 485.
[15] Opera, Tom. III, *De Bap.*, Quaest. xvi., *passim*. Edinburgh Edition.

believers. The later members of that church were like their elder brethren. So were those of all other churches constituted by the apostles and their coadjutors.

The divine record assures us that they repented, believed, and were baptized; then were added to the company of the disciples, that is, were received into the church; then "broke bread" with their brethren, in the regular and formal observance of the Lord's Supper.

That this was the invariable order of procedure is so clear to every earnest and thoughtful reader of the New Testament that we think it wholly unnecessary to attempt any formal proof, or to fortify our statement by quotations from the sacred record.

Now the apostolic churches are the models of all properly constituted churches. Such churches, therefore, whenever or wherever established are composed of baptized believers.

From the very nature and design of the Lord's Supper then, as understood by those among whom it was first established, and by whom it was first observed, it is clear that none can in an orderly and scriptural manner celebrate the holy rite but the true followers of Christ, constituted into regular churches. And it is equally clear that none can be constituted into such churches but those who have been baptized, upon a credible profession of faith, by a duly qualified administrator of the rite. From all which it is obvious that none but baptized believers, formally connected with the church, can properly partake of the Supper of the Lord. "To every man who contents himself with a plain view of the subject," says that

eminent Presbyterian theologian, Doctor Dick, "and has no purpose to serve by subtleties and refinements, it will appear that baptism is as much the initiating ordinance of the Christian, as circumcision was of the Jewish, dispensation. An uncircumcised man was not permitted to eat the Passover, and an unbaptized man should not be permitted to partake of the eucharist." [16]

Baptism, thus going before the celebration of the sacred Supper, according to scriptural order, also precedes it in the very nature of things. Baptism, we have seen, symbolizes regeneration, the new birth, the beginning of the new spiritual life. The Lord's Supper symbolizes the continued nourishment and support of that life. As, therefore, birth naturally precedes the nourishment and support of the newly developed life, so baptism naturally precedes participation of the Lord's Supper.

That the baptism which the first followers of Christ received was immersion is clear from the force of the Greek terms expressive of the rite and of its administration; from the circumstances, clearly implying immersion, attending its observance in the Apostolic age; from the symbolic import of the rite, as a death, burial, and resurrection; from the practice of all Christendom for many ages; from that of the Greek Church of our own times, whose language, though much modified by time, is substantially that in which the New Testament was written; and finally, from the common consent of the ablest and most learned men of both ancient and modern times.

[16] "Lectures on Theology," Vol. II, p. 421.

II

CONDITIONS OF ITS CELEBRATION

CONTINUING our discussion, we further see what are the essential circumstances and necessary conditions of a true scriptural observance of the Lord's Supper. Such observance is the simple reception, by baptized believers constituted into churches and observing all things whatsoever Christ has commanded, of bread and wine, fittingly representing the body of Jesus broken and his blood shed for them—the reception, not of bread alone, as by the popish laity in the observance of a sacrilegiously mutilated rite, but the reception of both the blessed symbols, the bread and wine, representing in their united and divine significance the very substance and vital principle of the whole Christ, the whole human and divine Being; the reception of these significant and striking symbols:

1. *In the church formally assembled.* And where else than among those who constitute the church, which is his body; and by whom else than by those who are the very members of his body, and for whom his life was offered up, should they be received?

2. *Not in private houses by individual believers, or by companies of Christians apart from the church,* even though they be members of it. The Christian pastor may not administer the sacred elements privately to one or more members of his flock, even though they be

aged or invalid believers, unable to attend upon the public ministrations of the sanctuary; to one in imminent danger of death; or to a few Christian individuals transiently sojourning, or permanently residing, in a private family, unless they there constitute a church (or quorum of the church), like that in Aquila and Priscilla's, or Nymphas' house, and are thus prepared to observe the rite according to its law, as simply and essentially commemorative of Christ. The notion that the pastor should perform these superfluous and nugatory things is born of the unscriptural and superstitious notion (blended, perhaps, with tender though mistaken sentiment), that the Lord's Supper is in some sort and in some degree necessary to the believer, apart from his observance of it as a commemoration of Christ. Certainly, so far as personal communion with Christ is concerned, with all its pure delights, such informal and irregular, and therefore wrong, observance of the rite is not required.

Christ will himself visit the poor, and the sick, and the strangers within his gates when they call upon him, and succor and solace and save them. He will come to them and "sup with them" in their own homes, and bless them with as sweet and rich a feast as any which they could enjoy formally with their brethren, whether in small select parties or "in the midst of the great congregation."

But the observance of Christ's ordinances is to be regarded, not so much as a matter of personal gratification, as of personal obligation; not so much as spiritual luxury, furnished for our free and unrestrained enjoyment, as a spiritual aliment prescribed and pre-

pared for our reception, a solemn duty enjoined for our performance under clearly defined conditions.

If one is unable, from the force of circumstances which he cannot control, to receive the rite of baptism in the manner in which it has been divinely appointed to be received, he is free from its obligations altogether, and may dispense even with the benefits which might accrue to him in its proper observance. He is not required or allowed to submit to some modification of it that might seem to be more convenient or agreeable. "After baptism, in itself considered, and simply as an *opus operatum*," says Knapp, "came to be regarded as essential to salvation, the question was started: Whether, in the want of water, baptism could not be performed with any other material; e. g., wine, milk, or sand? The question must be answered in the negative, since to do this would be contrary to the institution of Christ. For any one to be prevented, necessarily, from being baptized does not subject him to condemnation, but only the wilful and criminal refusal of this rite." [1]

The same law holds in respect to the Lord's Supper. Nothing can be substituted for the bread that appropriately represents Christ's body, nothing for the wine that represents his blood. When these cannot be obtained the obligation to observe the ordinance ceases so long as the insuperable difficulty remains. And so too, if from enforced absence through sickness, the infirmities of age, or any other cause a member of the church be unable to participate with the church in the observance of the sacred rite, he incurs no guilt from its

[1] "Christ. Theol.," p. 486.

non-observance. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." [2] And though he may suffer some loss of personal enjoyment, and perhaps of substantial profit, through the disability that deprives him of participation with the church in the joyous feast, he may not indemnify himself for the loss by a violation of the law and order of God's house in privately and irregularly partaking of the sacred elements.

Although "the obligation of keeping the Passover, the type of the Lord's Supper, was so strict that whoever should neglect it was condemned to death" (Num. 9 : 13), yet "those who had any lawful impediment, as a journey, sickness, or uncleanness, voluntary or involuntary," might "defer its celebration till the second month of the ecclesiastical year," when they might be able to observe it, according to the prescribed conditions.[3]

The first Supper, we have seen, was celebrated in the church, and by its members alone—not even the mother of Jesus, as we have said, or the other holy women who so loved and served him, or the seventy evangelists whom he had sent forth to propagate his gospel, being invited to it. And, as we have also seen, there is no instance in the Apostolic age of its being observed by others than members of the church, or by them apart from the church. For any different practice there is neither apostolic precept nor example. Such practice rests, in so far as it prevails at all, upon nothing better than mere human theories and sympathies, inspired by

[2] 2 Cor. 8 : 12. [3] "Enc. Rel. Knowl.," Art. "Passover."

misconception of the nature and design of the blessed ordinance, mixed in many instances with a misleading and deeply harmful superstition.

3. *Not*—apart from the church, as such— *in public convocations,* made up of mixed multitudes from all quarters of the land, even though they love the Lord Jesus, and have assembled to concert measures for the advancement of the interests of his kingdom in the world. The Lord's Supper is not to be carried out of the church, any more than the lamb of the Passover was to be carried out of the family.[4] Beyond the sacred precincts of the church the Lord's table is not to be spread, any more than the paschal feast was to be partaken of outside of the precincts of the family. Such a convocation, as we have indicated, though it may consist of members of the churches and include their greatest and most illustrious leaders, is not itself a church. And there is no more disparagement of those who compose such a body in withholding the Lord's Supper from them than there was disparagement of the Seventy and others, friends and followers of Jesus, when he withheld from them (as not formal members of the church which he had just organized) the sacred symbols of his body and blood.

Doubtless it might sometimes have been agreeable to the ancient Israelites, in some of their more warmly patriotic, and fraternal, and festive moods, to celebrate the feast of the Passover (especially on extraordinary occasions) in larger and more promiscuous companies than those of the private families to which its observance was confined, and in a more public and imposing

[4] Exod. 12 : 46.

way than that prescribed by the law of Moses. But, loyal to the divine authority under which they were placed, they never felt justified in taking such a liberty with the holy rite. They never so perverted it as to carry it out of the family (beautiful image, prototype of the church), or otherwise materially departed from its divinely appointed conditions. Shall Christians, professing a heartier and more intelligent loyalty toward their Lord than his ancient people usually displayed, be less submissive to divine law, less observant of divine order, in respect to the Lord's Supper, than were those "stiff-necked" ancient people in respect to the feast which was but the shadow of the richer one ordained by Christ?

III

CUSTODIANS AND ADMINISTRATORS

THERE are those who think that Christ left his church without a fixed and determined policy. But we cannot suppose that he, who is the wisest of lawgivers and rulers, would set up the most important establishment ever erected on the earth, and leave the conservation of its character, the preservation of its integrity, and the administration of its affairs, to be determined (without well-defined law and clearly designated administrators of that law) by the infirmities of human character and temper, and by the ever-fluctuating states and conditions of human society. Human governors are wiser than that. The wisdom of the divine Governor surely does not fall below the human standard. Immutable law, perfect order, as we have said in another place, reigns throughout Jehovah's natural kingdom. There is perfect adjustment of means to ends. Every necessary agent is appointed, its place fixed, its functions defined, the proper relations, gradations, and interdependencies all determined. A wise system of supremacy on the one hand and of subordination on the other is established and uniformly maintained. And so, doubtless, whether it be always recognized or not, it is in his spiritual kingdom. The church is a body constituted and governed upon well-established and ascertainable principles, though, like those of the natural

world, some of them may at times elude the view of those who do not diligently study and investigate them. The character of the constituent elements of the church, the position, duties, and qualifications of its officers, are defined; its true sphere is assigned, its functions determined, the law of its life fixed, the spirit and the modes of its operation indicated, and the rules by which it is to be guided and controlled authoritatively announced.

Christ having made his church the pillar and ground of his truth, has committed that truth with all the ordinances of his house to her charge. She is its depositary and custodian. For fidelity to her precious trust he holds her to a high and solemn accountability. He gave her at the first his holy Supper, saying to those who, as her proper constituents, partook of the divine repast: "This do in remembrance of me; for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Thus did he give the rite to them and to their rightful successors in perpetuity. Theirs at the first, it is theirs still—a sacred charge, an inalienable possession.

Having said that "baptism and the Lord's Supper are committed to the custody and guardianship of the visible churches of Christ, as such, which are the trustees, the administrators of these ordinances by a divine appointment," Professor Curtis proceeds further to remark: "It must be quite evident that they are committed to the care of some agents. They are not simply enjoined in the Bible and left without any to defend them against abuses and attacks, or to exhibit their divine authority and the duty of submitting to them,

none being responsible for administering them to proper subjects and to those alone. On whom does this responsibility officially devolve? We know that one important duty of the visible churches of Christ is to uphold the doctrines of the gospel and to spread them before the whole world. It is thus that they exhibit their character, as the golden candlesticks, supporting the light of divine truth in the world, trimmed and filled with the oil of grace by the hand of Christ himself. But is it only doctrines that give light? Is there nothing luminous in the ordinances of the gospel? To whom, then, is the maintenance of these institutions to be committed? Whose duty is it to uphold and to administer them, but those churches of Christ regularly constituted, according to the institutions of the gospel?" [1]

But the church has divinely appointed officers through whom she acts. The chief of these are her bishops or pastors. They are her ministers. It is their function, as the servants of Christ and the servants of his church, to dispense the truth and to administer the ordinances. To them, as the representatives of Christ, the exponents of his character and offices, the expounders of his word, and the administrators of the rites which he has instituted, is assigned the duty and the honor of presiding at the sacred Supper, and of dispensing to their brethren the heavenly viands of the Master's board; as to them, and to them only, is assigned the duty and the honor of administering the kindred rite of baptism. "In the ancient Christian church the Lord's Supper was as regularly admin-

[1] "Progress of Bapt. Principles," p. 296, 297.

istered by the teachers as baptism. Justin the martyr (Apol., 1, 85, seq.) says that the προεστῶτες (heads of affairs or presidents, the bishops or pastors) consecrated and distributed the elements; and Tertullian (De Corona Militis) says: *Nec de aliorum manu quam praesidentium sumimus,* 'We do not receive (the elements) from the hands of others than the presiding officers'—the bishops or pastors." [2]

No private member, or deacon even, if there be due regard to order, may then administer the sacred rite unless, under extraordinary circumstances, specially appointed by the church; in which case he should be regarded as, for the time, endowed with pastoral functions.

The Lord's Supper, committed at the first to the apostolic church, remains with her still a sacred trust, κτῆμα εἰς ἀεί, a precious "possession forever." Although sometimes obscured by the thick clouds of her "great tribulation" and seemingly lost, that beauteous "bride of heaven," that glorious "spouse of Christ," has ever been and still is in the world, brightened as well as purified by her "martyrs' fires," strengthened by her hard and trying discipline. Against her the gates of hell have never ceased to wage furious warfare. But they have not, however for a time it may have seemed, ultimately and really prevailed. She is invincible. Onset after onset against her heaven-constructed battlements and bulwarks, like billows of an angry sea against the everlasting rock, has recoiled, broken and wasted and spent. Those battlements and bulwarks are impregnable. Greater

[2] Knapp's "Christ. Theol.," p. 503.

is he that is for her than all they that are against her. And, at the last, he will bring her, triumphant and glorious, out of the fierce conflict. Right faithfully, by his grace, has she clung to and preserved the heavenly treasure committed to her charge, through fire and flood, through terrible tempests of persecution, confiscations of goods, banishments, imprisonments, tortures, blood, and death. Let the memory of the past give hope and inspiration for the future. Having loved his own, he will love them to the end.

Whatever the pressure of misrepresentation, reproach, obloquy, her children may have to bear for fidelity to their adored Lord, to his truth, and to the ordinances of his house, let them not be discouraged; but, possessing themselves in faith and patience, let them remember that for him, and for them, their saintly and heroic fathers endured immensely more and yet were sustained. And so, emulating those of whom the world was not worthy, let them "keep the ordinances" as they have been delivered unto them: keep them in their divine purity and integrity, in their divine idea, in their divine order; keep them in their very name—as important to the just conception and faithful conservation of that idea, that order, that integrity and purity—in fine, keep them in all their celestial beauty and completeness, and in all their scriptural requisitions.

IV

FREQUENCY OF OBSERVANCE

With respect to the continued formal observance of the Lord's Supper, and the frequency of its administration, it may be proper to remark that the primitive Christians seem, at first, to have celebrated the rite on every Lord's Day; and, indeed, at every meeting of the church. In later times the practice of the churches has widely varied. In our own day some celebrate the rite weekly, others monthly, others still, quarterly, and some, we believe, only annually.

In respect to both baptism and the Lord's Supper a vast deal of very questionable "discretionary power" is used by the churches and by individual Christians. The observance of these rites, so solemnly enjoined by their divine Author, is often made a matter of simple convenience rather than of imperative and pressing obligation. Without any adequate reason at all, or even plausible plea, baptism is often put off indefinitely by professed believers from day to day, month to month, sometimes even from year to year. And not a few, it is to be feared, make the very form and substance of the rite conform to their convenience. With regard to the Lord's Supper the course of many is equally reprehensible. The duty of the local, individual church to keep and guard faithfully, lovingly, and devoutly to observe our Lord's memorial rite, is shared by all its

members; for the church has no existence apart from its individual constituents. What is the duty of all is the duty of each. This solemn and imperative individual duty, in regard to the sacred rite, is sometimes most strangely and culpably neglected, to the disparagement of the ordinance, the deep discredit and serious personal damage of the delinquent himself, and to the injury of the whole church. Some without any scriptural warrant, as we have so fully seen, regarding the Supper as specially a communion with the members of the church, absent themselves from the Lord's table because they have a personal pique or prejudice against a fellow member. Others, humble and self-distrustful, stay away from it because of a feeling of personal unworthiness, while yet conscious of supreme love of their divine Lord. Others, again, on account, it is to be feared, of an unwise and unscriptural exaggeration by their religious teachers (through a sort of hierarchical heredity) of the superior sacredness of this ordinance as compared with others—even such a man as Robert Hall, calling it "the sacrament,"[1] as if it stood alone, no other rite ranking with it—are deterred from the observance of the blessed ordinance, to their own spiritual detriment as well as to the grief of their wiser and stronger brethren, by a weak and superstitious dread of its awful sanctity and holiness. "Not a few who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," says the devout and eloquent Dr. John M. Mason, "are afraid to touch the symbols of his body and blood. They would go to his table, but when they think of attempting it their courage fails; the spirit of

[1] "Works," Vol. I, p. 438, and elsewhere.

bondage bows them down; and instead of feeling like children drawing nigh to a most compassionate father, they feel like criminals dragged to the tribunal of a judge. Why this unhappiness? Beyond dispute, in part from the trappings which have been hung around the table of love, and from the unwarranted manner in which even good men have permitted themselves to speak of it. Between both it has been made an object of dread. Its tender persuasions, its rich consolations have been too little regarded; and even to believers it has been arrayed in terrors and fenced with thunder." [2]

Frequency of observance of the holy rite is to be encouraged for many reasons, and it is greatly to be regretted that so many churches and private Christians are delinquent in this regard.

But, however frequent or infrequent the celebration of the rite, its formal observance is to be continued to the second coming of Christ. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." [3]

[2] "Complete Works," Vol. I, p. 470.
[3] 1 Cor. 11 : 26.

PART III

PERVERSION OF ORIGINAL DESIGN

I

THE GREAT OBJECT SUPERSEDED

The first followers of Christ were full of enthusiasm for him, and cherished sacredly everything that kept him and his great work vividly in mind. But many of their successors early manifested a different spirit. Even in the time of the apostles themselves signs of delinquency and defection appeared among his professed people. Christ himself, in proper person, was no longer with them. He was gone and out of sight. And their thoughts and their affections, with much of that supreme interest that had been felt for him personally, began to be transferred to other objects. Some were for Paul, some for Apollos, and some for Cephas. Their party, or at least the church of which they themselves personally formed a part, began to divide attention, interest, and honor with its divine Founder, and communion with that began to share largely with commemoration of him, and ultimately to become paramount in the minds of many of them. So early did his professed disciples—confounding in spiritual and religious things essentially distinct facts and principles, and subordinating the greater to the less, as is not done by men of sound minds in secular concerns, give striking and lamentable illustration, as they have so often done since, of the words of Jesus: "The children of

this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." [1]

The prominence so early and so generally given to the idea of communion with the church, and of intercommunion between believers at the table of the Lord, and which (along with other things of which we shall have occasion to speak), so soon after its institution by Christ, led to the gross perversion of the original design of the sacred Supper, though in no degree encouraged either by the personal teachings of Jesus, or by those of his apostles, respecting the holy rite—they having never said anything at all about such communion and intercommunion—is, perhaps, to some extent the unfortunate result of a very natural inference, conspiring with the self-exaggerating tendency which we have already mentioned and of which we shall have further to speak, in connection with radically defective and superstitious notions of the essential character and object of the rite. Eating and drinking together tends to the cultivation of sympathy and friendship among men. It has therefore been regarded by all people as a token and symbol of good-will and fellowship. The Arab of the desert, the savage of the western wilds, the roving, barbarous Tartar of the Asiatic steppes, the stolid Eskimo amid his eternal snows, the imbruted Bushman even, under the blazing suns of southern Africa, as well as the most highly civilized men of ancient and of modern times, have all alike thus recognized it. Many, therefore, have been led to think that Christ must have had prominently in view the cultivation of fellowship and communion among his fol-

[1] Luke 16 : 8.

lowers when he instituted the sacred Supper. But, although this may have been one of the subordinate, incidental ends contemplated by our Lord, and which the holy rite when properly observed to some extent subserves, it is to be remarked that while Christ never neglects subordinate ends, but in the affluence of his divine wisdom and power often associates them with more important ones, he ever keeps mainly in view the supreme end, and is always too mindful of order and of the just relations of things ever to allow the subordinate to come into competition with the superior, the incidental and inferior to disparage, obscure, or usurp the place of the essential and the supreme.

As if to avoid all danger of this, as well as to guard against other evils, the humble repast which he provided for his disciples was made so different from other meals that many, like Dagg and others (though we do not at all agree with them for reasons stated in a preceding section), have doubted that it was intended to be a supper at all, and have hesitated to give it that appellation, maintaining that Paul probably referred not to the rite instituted by Christ when, in 1 Corinthians 11 : 20, he employed the words "Lord's Supper" (*κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*), but to the agape, or feast of love, which had been connected with it.[2]

While perfectly adapted, in its divine simplicity, to accomplish its great object as a universal and perpetual memorial of Christ, the holy rite is far too simple, serious, solemn, spiritual, as well as outwardly meager to have for its main or prominent object that of the ordinary feast. This was so strongly felt by the primi-

[2] See "Manual of Theol.," Part II, pp. 56-58, 205.

tive Christians that in order to give fuller expression to their festive and social sympathies they connected with the Supper of the Lord the more abundant and freer feast of the agape, not a divine institution at all, whose abuse by the Corinthians the apostle so severely censured, asking them whether (if they must have feasts) they had not houses of their own in which thus socially and festively to indulge themselves, without despising the church of God, shaming their poorer brethren, desecrating the place dedicated to a pure and spiritual service, and degrading by unworthy concomitants the rite consecrated to infinitely higher and holier purposes than those of individual and social enjoyment.[3]

In this view it clearly appears that, although Christ may have contemplated, as incidental to his main purpose, the cultivation by his followers of mutual affection and a proper *esprit de corps* in their observance of the rite commemorative of himself, that object was an altogether secondary and inferior one. If indeed he made it coincident, he did not, in any sense or in any degree, make it coordinate with his grand design.

That the Christians of the Apostolic age did not regard the Lord's Supper as specially a rite of communion with each other is manifest from what we have just now stated of their connecting with it the agape, or feast of love, "at which," in the language of Conybeare and Howson, "they met to realize their fellowship one with another."[4] And it was only when the perversion and abuse of it, as at Corinth, made it necessary to separate it from the Lord's Supper, and finally

[3] 1 Cor. 11 : 22. [4] "Life and Epistles of Saint Paul," p. 385.

to abolish it altogether, that, as is most probable, the mutual fellowship which the agape was designed to cultivate was supposed by many to be an essential object of the sacred Supper itself, and that the latter, filling its own place and that of the agape among them, began to be termed, under the force of influences of which we are now to speak, "the fellowship" (ἡ κοινωνία), or the communion, and that the great object of Christ in the institution of the rite was superseded and subordinated to other and infinitely inferior purposes.

Of some of the chief causes of this extraordinary and lamentable perversion, we proceed in the following section to speak.

II

CAUSES OF THE PERVERSION

1. *Self-exaggeration of the post-apostolic church and its dignitaries.*

THE perversion of the Lord's Supper, like that of baptism and other corruptions of Christianity, was gradually and almost silently and imperceptibly effected. It began, as all wrong-doing does, in disregard of law. Inattention, at first, to the law of the Lord's Supper in its essential principles and spirit and in its most important practical provisions, culminating at length in almost total disregard of it, ultimately led to the grossest misconceptions of the nature and design of the simple yet sublime rite and, step by step, to the most unscriptural and unreasonable departures in its administration from its original purpose.

This disloyalty to Christ was the natural effect of the great, primal, all-embracing cause (proximate or remote, direct or indirect) of all disobedience and sin, and of all the essential evil in the world. That potent, far-reaching, all-embracing cause, stated briefly and generally, is: self-exaggeration on the part of subject and morally accountable beings, expanding and developing into self-idolatry and self-worship, insubordination to the supreme Authority, revolt against law, leading inevitably to all forms and all degrees of error

and of sin. By it fell the angels who kept not their first estate but aspired to divide empire with Jehovah, the first human pair in Eden aspiring to "be as gods," and all, indeed, of whatever nature or degree, who have fallen "thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think." It was under the influence of this strong and all-pervasive, subtle, and seductive spirit of self-exaggeration, seconded and powerfully reenforced by evil forces of which we shall presently speak, and which were themselves (immediately or mediately) called into play by that spirit, that the post-apostolic Christians, "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ," arrogantly affirming that outside the pale of their party, beyond the limits of their own immediate "following"—the teachings of Christ to the contrary, notwithstanding [1]—were no virtue and no salvation, magnifying the importance of connection with themselves and immensely overestimating the benefits supposed to accrue from such connection, thoroughly perverted the original design of the Lord's Supper, superseding the grand object for which it was first ordained—the commemoration of Christ—and almost wholly supplanting it by the ridiculously inferior one—communion with themselves!—the prolific source of other perversions of the pure and simple rite; apart from which, even that extremest perversion of all, the mass, with its accompanying superstitions and absurdities, had never been possible.

It would be ludicrous, if it were not melancholy, to contemplate the absurd exhibitions by many of the early Christians of this spirit of self-exaggeration. The

[1] Luke 9 : 49, 50.

grandiloquent titles bestowed by the Chinese upon their country and its rulers, the high-flown terms, the superb adjectives by which "the magnanimous Mexican nation" is wont so naively to characterize itself, provoke a smile. But it excites very different feelings from those of risibility, something far sadder than a smile, when we see the early Christians, whom we have been taught to regard with so much reverence and admiration, applying to themselves in a spirit of Pharisaic pride, with infinite self-complacency, the most exalted language of self-laudation, while pouring out opprobrious epithets and heaping up anathemas upon all who ventured to differ from them—upon men like Novatian, Donatus the Great, Jovinian, and Vigilantius, of whom neither the world nor a corrupt church was worthy. The Council of Nice, in 325, styled itself the "Great and Holy Synod," its president, "our most honorable Lord," and the church of which he was bishop, "the great and most holy church of Alexandria." The Council of Ephesus, about a century later, spoke of its own members as the "Holy and Blessed Fathers." And other so-called ecumenical or universal councils, while actually claiming divine inspiration and infallibility, displayed the same spirit of extravagant self-appreciation, bad taste, and most revolting vanity, applying to themselves, to their metropolitan churches, to their more prominent and influential church dignitaries, and to others, language equally lofty and inflated,[2] and at length far transcending it, even calling the Bishop of Rome, as if he were the supreme spiritual and divine Majesty, "His

[2] See Mosheim, Neander, Taylor on "Ancient Christianity," "Hammond on the Canons," etc.

Holiness"! and, indeed, "our Lord God, the Pope" ("God on earth," *Deus in terris*).

In illustration and corroboration of these strong statements, we cite the words of the distinguished Isaac Taylor, who, though but a layman, was an assiduous student of divinity and deeply read in patristic lore. After quoting from a tract written by the celebrated Chrysostom, a most extravagant, florid, and flaming passage in praise of the ideal "immaculate nun," he says: "The quotation is a sample, one among hundreds, nay, thousands, which might be easily produced, of a fault generally characteristic of the great writers (and the small writers), of the ancient church—I mean the propensity to magnify and glorify what is merely human; in fact, to worship and to deify the creature more than the Creator; that is to say, so to magnify human virtue, as that upon the general field of the people's view, the encomium of man subtends a larger angle than the praises of God and of his Christ. Do not the Fathers, then, worship God? Assuredly; but when they muster all the forces of their eloquence, when they catch fire and swell as if inspired; whenever (I must be permitted to make the allusion, for it is really appropriate), whenever they take their seat upon the tripod and begin to foam, the subject of the rhapsody is sure to be—'a blessed martyr,' it may be an apostle, or a recently departed 'doctor,' or a 'virgin confessor'; or it is the relics of such a one, and the miraculous virtues of his sacred dust. . . The Saviour does indeed sit enthroned within the veil of the Christian temple; but what the Christian populace hear most about is—the temple itself, and its embroideries, and its

gildings, and its ministers, and its rites, and the saints that fill its niches. In a word, what was visible and what was human stood in front of what is invisible and divine; and when we find a system of blasphemous idolatry fully expanded in the Middle Ages, this system cannot in any equity be spoken of as anything else than a following out of the adulatory rhapsodies of the great writers and preachers of the Nicene church. Of this impious adulation the martyrs and confessors were the first objects; and then came those 'terrestrial seraphs,' the 'monks and virgins.'" Speaking in this connection of the fulsome, adulatory effusions of some of the "most noted" of the Fathers, "such as Chrysostom, Basil, the two Gregories, Jerome, and Augustine," Taylor continues: "On what occasions do these great orators and doctors kindle and glow? When is it that they exhaust the powers of language and return upon their theme, as if they could never think they had done it justice? Is it when they are holding forth before the multitude the glory of the Saviour of sinners? Is it when they are blowing the silver trumpet of mercy in the hearing of the guilty? Alas! it is not so. The Saviour, not denied, indeed, but not glorified, is left by these orators to sleep in the hinder part of the ship; or he is imprisoned in the creeds and liturgies of the church, while commendations which Grecian and Roman sages would equally have loathed to pronounce, and have blushed to have received, are lavished upon the heroes of the church and its anchorites." [3]

In this spirit of adulation and worship of men, rather than of praise and adoration of God, this spirit of

[3] "Ancient Christianity," pp. 260-263.

homage to the saints, heroes, and heroines of the church rather than to him who is "God over all, blessed forever," the Founder, Supreme Lord, and Saviour of the Church, this ineffably extravagant and preposterous spirit of self-exaggeration and self-idolatry, many teachers and leaders of the early churches made participation with the church in the "awful mystery" of the Lord's Supper, as its elements were consecrated and administered by their own or other priestly hands—such consecration imparting to their rite all their value—the test of personal character, and of social and religious position. They determined by it even business relations and engagements. Nay, they made it the very passport and portal to heaven. Apart from it no one could expect patronage, preferment, or honor on earth. Without it the gates of paradise were barred and bolted against him forever.

In the ancient canons this simple memorial rite, as manipulated and administered by the priests, was often called "the perfection" (*τὸ τέλειον*), or that which completed and consummated the Christian character—"that sacred mystery which unites us to Christ and gives us the most consummate perfection that we are capable of in this life."[4] Participation in it, they did not doubt, was necessary to salvation. When administered to the dying it was ludicrously called the *viaticum* (*ἐφόδιον*, "provision for a journey"), by which was meant that departing souls received through it "the preparation or provision for their journey to the other world."[5]

[4] Bingham, as cited in "Hammond on the Canons," p. 157.
[5] Hammond, p. 49.

Chillingworth, after saying that "Irenæus (Lib. 4, *Contra Haeres.,* c. 34) makes our union to Christ by the eucharist the foundation of the hope of our resurrection," adds: "And hence, in probability it is, that the Nicene Council styled this sacrament *symbolum resurrectionis,* the pledge of our resurrection; and Ignatius (*Ep. ad Ephes.*) *pharmacum immortalitatis,* the medicine of immortality." [6]

"There was a tendency," says Isaac Taylor, "of everything toward it [the 'awful' eucharistic rite]; it was more thought of and regarded than any other element of the religious system; the highest benefits were connected with a due participation of it, and the most terrible evils were the consequences of even a temporary exclusion from the privilege. Before the time when the church wielded secular powers, excommunication was the last resource in dealing with the refractory; and after the time when ecclesiastical censures were followed by civil pains, it continued to be the terrible precursive act of a process which might deprive the victim of fortune, liberty, life, and consign him to eternal misery." [7] John, "the golden-mouthed" (Chrysostom), as Taylor tells us, "lauded the eucharistic rite more than the Saviour. When 'the rites of the dreadful and mystic table' were celebrated, 'cherubim and seraphim,' he assured the people, 'hovered, trembling, over the altar, veiling their faces, lest they should catch a glimpse of the consecrated elements.'" [8] Wine and bread had become God, and commanded veneration from the host of heaven.

[6] See Chillingworth's "Works," Vol. III, p. 361.
[7] "Ancient Christianity," p. 540. [8] "Anc. Christ.," pp. 358, 368.

In this view of it we wonder not that the poor deluded people, ignorant and superstitious, stood in awe of the fearful rite and its terrible mysteries, "which archangels dared not look upon." We wonder not at its tremendous influence, nor at that "intense anxiety not to be excluded from communion," felt by those who regarded admission to the ceremony as the height of all blessedness, exclusion from it the depth of all misery.

We know that far juster views are now taken by enlightened evangelical people. And yet there is seen in many quarters, under the influence of a certain hierarchical heredity, as we have styled it, not a little of the workings of the old leaven of superstition and extravagance respecting this plain and simple rite. However unspeakably dear and sacred to our human hearts, however ineffably tender and touching to our human sympathies, it is really not diviner or holier than any other of God's ordinances. Yet many lay special stress upon its sanctity, scrupulously calling it "the holy sacrament," and "the holy communion" (as if all God's ordinances were not holy, or as if this, in particular, were holier than the rest), partaking of its symbolic elements, not as anciently in a recumbent position, usual when taking a meal, or sitting, according to modern custom, but on their knees.

In all this, as well as in that so common diversion of the mind from contemplation of the Lord's Supper as a simple, devout, and grateful commemoration of our divine Lord, to considerations of mere human and selfish interest, there is, we repeat, still seen something of the old error, still felt much of its baneful influence.

2. *The seductive and corrupting influence of paganism.*

The influence of heathenism upon ancient Christianity, which was early brought into close and deadly contact with it, was very great. It led to errors and innovations in the church, which marred the beauty and weakened the strength of the fair fabric which had been raised by Christ and his apostles. "It had been alleged by the heathen," says Coleman in his work on the "Apostolic and Primitive Church," "as an objection to the Christians, that they had no solemn rites, nothing attractive, nothing imposing to command the admiration of men. To obviate this objection, and reconcile the heathen to the Christian religion, not a few even of these pagan rites, with a little variation, were incorporated into the rituals of the churches. After this fatal departure from the spirit of the gospel, the progress of declension, exhibited in constantly increasing ostentation and formality, was easy and rapid. The elegant and forcible language of Robert Hall is the happiest expression which we can give to our view of this speedy and disastrous degeneracy: 'The descent of the human mind from the spirit to the letter, from what is vital and intellectual to what is ritual and external in religion, is the true source of idolatry and superstition in all the multifarious forms which they have assumed; and as it began early to corrupt the religion of nature or, more properly, of patriarchal tradition, so it soon obscured the luster and destroyed the simplicity of the Christian institute. In proportion as genuine devotion declined, the love of pomp and ceremony increased. The few and simple rites of Chris-

tianity were extolled beyond all reasonable bounds; new ones were invented to which mysterious meanings were attached, until the religion of the New Testament became in process of time as insupportable as the Mosaic law.' " [9]

This " disastrous degeneracy " of the post-apostolic churches, under the influence of paganism, powerfully operating upon the native depravity and tendency to evil of the human heart, is strikingly exhibited in the following brief summary of instances of conformity with heathenism, given by Bishop Hopkins in his refutation of the Romish writer Milner's " End of Controversy ": " The adoption of heathen days and festivals by giving them a Christian appellation; the ascription of the powers of the heathen deities to the Christian saints and martyrs; the despotic authority of the Druids transferred to the Christian priests; the superstitious fables of heathenism matched and exceeded by false miracles and impostures; the feudal system of the barbarians adopted by the clergy; their admiration of warriors, leading priests and bishops to distinguish themselves in battle; the heathen ordeals of fire and water engrafted on the judgments of the church; their veneration for celibacy made a law for priests and monastics; while all their monstrous tales of enchanters, necromancers, evil spirits, elves, fairies—their charms and incantations and amulets—remained in the bosom of the church, with no other change than associating them as much as possible with sacred days and seasons, Christmas, Hallowe'en, etc." [10]

[9] " Apostolic and Prim. Church," p. 425, 426.
[10] " End of Controversy Controverted," Vol. II, p. 263.

Let us briefly trace the course of this anti-Nicene and subsequent degeneracy that we may have a proper appreciation of its rational and of its most deplorable results.

Speaking of Tertullian as having given "the clue (which may indeed elsewhere be found clearly enough) to the institution of celibacy, as a permanent order in the church," the learned author of the valuable work on "Ancient Christianity and the Doctrines of the Oxford Tracts," having in mind the sophistical reasonings, then so much in vogue, remarks: "Satan had his devoted widows and his virgin priestesses, and should not Christ have the like? The well-known heathen practices, in this respect were looked upon with a sort of jealousy by the ill-judging leaders of the church, who deemed it a point of honor not to be outdone in any extravagant act or practice of devotion by the Gentiles, over whom they might have been content to claim the genuine superiority of real virtue. The same fatal ambition, as we shall see hereafter, operated as a principal means of perverting the ritual and system of worship, and of spoiling in all its parts the simplicity of the gospel." [11]

Tertullian, "the most vigorous, as well as one of the earliest of the Christian writers, and the contemporary of men who had conversed with the immediate successors of the apostles," was a man of culture, a lawyer of ability and position, and had been a pagan. In the passage referred to by Taylor, as "giving the clue to the institution of celibacy," Tertullian says: "Among the heathen a strictness of discipline in this respect is

[11] Taylor's "Anc. Christ.," p. 138.

observed which ours do not submit to. But these restraints the devil imposes on his servants and he is obeyed; and hereby stimulates the servants of God to reach an equal virtue. The priests of Gehenna retain their continence; for the devil knows how to destroy men, even in the practice of the virtues; and he cares not, so that he does but slay them, whether it be by the indulging of the flesh or by mortifying it." To which Taylor adds: "Well would it have been for the church had this double-dealing of the adversary been thoroughly understood and so those devices resisted, which were as fatal to the serious and fervent as the common baits of sensuality are to the mass of mankind. A false principle once assumed, under strong excitement, has the power to infatuate even the strongest and the best informed minds, and to lead them to any extent of extravagance." [12]

"Deep-rooted superstition," says Bishop Warburton, "is always spreading wide and more wide." And it is hard to eradicate. It seems indeed well-nigh immortal. How did that which had infected many of the early Fathers, combining with other evil principles, with wondrous celerity overspread the Christian world! How long has it endured! How long does it promise still to endure! What a huge crop of incredible errors, of unspeakable evils to mankind, has it brought forth, and does it promise still to bring forth! "The imitation of paganism," as Gibbon (in common with other authors whom we cite) phrases it, with its whole "hierarchy of saints and angels, of imperfect and subordinate deities," its "images and relics," its "visions

[12] "Anc. Christ.," pp. 138, 139.

and miracles," and all the other innumerable perversions and abominations of popery was, in great part, its product.

Even "after the conversion of the imperial city, the Christians," says Gibbon, "still continued, in the month of February, the annual celebration of the Lupercalia; to which they ascribed a secret and mysterious influence on the genial powers of the animal and vegetable world." The popish "Jubilees," of a later date, the same author further tells us, "were the copy of the 'Secular Games,' which had been instituted or revived by the pagan Emperor Augustus." [13]

The author of the well-known work on the "Variations of Popery," the distinguished Doctor Edgar, speaking of that great theological figment, purgatory, first hinted at by Augustine, and subsequently made a fixed and capital dogma of the papal church, says: "The absurdity has, with some modifications adapting it to another system, been stolen, without being acknowledged, from heathenism; and appended, like a useless and deforming wen to the fair form of Christianity." [14]

As it was in respect to the institutions of celibacy and monachism, the festivals of the Lupercalia, the lustrations and processions, the jubilees, purgatory, and innumerable other unscriptural and baleful things gradually introduced, the worship of the Virgin, the saints, angels, images, etc., conceived and developed amongst a superstitious, corrupt, and paganized people, so was it in regard to the Lord's Supper; perverted

[13] See "Decline and Fall," Vol. III, p. 493; Vol. I, p. 293, with note.
[14] "Variations of Popery," p. 516.

views of it, at first, and the application to it of erroneous terms, all culminating at last in the sacrifice of the mass (the "unseemly epithet" imposed upon the rite), with the priestly jugglery which has been connected with it, and in paying divine homage to "the host" or consecrated wafer, brazenly affirmed to be "the real body and blood, soul and divinity" of Christ—"the most enormous imposition on the reason of mankind," says Bishop Hopkins, "that was ever attempted or accomplished since the world began." [15]

This was the monstrous outcome, embodiment, and climax of the long and portentous series of perversions of the Lord's Supper from its original design, which had been going on for centuries; and of which the celebrated Bishop Burnet, in language equally strong and impressive as that just now quoted from Bishop Hopkins, thus speaks: "What can we think of that constellation of prodigies in the sacrament of the altar—as they pretend to explain it, and all really to no purpose—but that it is an art to bring the world by wholesale to renounce their reason and sense, and to have a most wonderful veneration for a sort of men, who can, with a word, perform the most astonishing thing that ever was?" [16]—convert a small particle of bread into the infinite, almighty, and everlasting God; nay, into more gods, each one infinite and eternal, than ever filled all earth's pantheons!

The origin of the famous name of "the mass," as an appellation of the Lord's Supper, fixed upon it by the ignorance of the people, the superstition and folly,

[15] "End of Controversy Controverted," Hopkins, Vol. II, p. 183.
[16] "Hist. Ref. Ch. Eng.," Vol. II, Pref., p. xxvii.

selfishness and greed, and infinite arrogance of the priests, is of curious interest and, in view of all that it involves, worthy of notice. In his reply to Milner, Doctor Hopkins thus speaks of it: "But even the very name which you have chosen to adopt for this solemn sacrament, is another innovation which your own writers cannot trace to an earlier period than the latter part of the fourth, or, more probably, the fifth century. The word mass is derived from the dismission of the catechumens, or the unbaptized, together with all the rest of the congregation except the communicants, when the Liturgy appointed for the Eucharist was about to be commenced. The deacons proclaimed aloud, *Ite missa est,* that is, 'Depart ye, it is dismissed,' meaning that the mixed assembly of the church (ecclesia), was dismissed. The popular sense, however, converting the participle of the verb into a noun, conceived the term missa to signify the Eucharist itself; and your church in due time adopted the novelty with her usual facility; and thus has arisen the unseemly epithet, instead of the really primitive phrases of the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, etc. Therefore this term, missa, or the mass, is not to be found in Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome, or the Fathers who preceded them. It is very old, I admit; but the church of Christ is more than four centuries older. And hence our English Reformers laid this too aside, and restored with perfect propriety the original, correct, and expressive appellation." [17]

In this tissue of errors and absurdities, this marvelous "complex" of ignorance and superstition, ambi-

[17] "End of Controversy Controverted," Hopkins, Vol. II, pp. 223, 224.

tion and avarice, sacrilege and blasphemy, "the mass" culminated, as we have said, under pagan and other corrupting influences combined, the extraordinary and astounding abuse of the Lord's Supper and its unspeakably gross perversion from the beautiful and touching simplicity of its original design.

Having characterized, in general terms, this abominable caricature and burlesque, this horrid travesty of the Supper of our Lord, and furnished the foregoing striking account of the origin of its name, we give the following succinct and graphic account of the thing itself. Surely corruption, abuse, perversion, could no farther go. In his "History of the Reformation of the Church of England," Bishop Burnet says: "It is certain there was no part of worship more corrupted than this sacrament of the Lord's Supper was. The first institution was so plain and simple that, except in the words, 'This is my body,' there is nothing which could give a color to the corruptions that were afterward brought in. The heathens had their mysteries, which the priests concealed with hard and dark words, and dressed up with much pomp; and thereby supported their own esteem with the people; since they looked on these to be of so high a nature that all those who had the ordering of them were accounted sacred persons. The primitive Christians retained the first simplicity of divine institutions for some ages; but afterward, as their numbers increased, they made use of some things not unlike those the heathen had practised, to draw the Gentiles more easily into their belief; since external shows made deep impressions in the vulgar. . . And after the Roman emperors turned

Christian, much of that vast wealth of which they and the people were masters was brought into the church and applied to these superstitions. Yet it became not so universally corrupt till, by the invasion of the Goths, Vandals, and other barbarous nations, the Roman Empire was broken and divided into many kingdoms. These new conquerors were rude and ignorant, wholly given to sensible things; and learning being universally extinguished, gross superstition took place; for more refined superstitions would not serve the turn of darker ages. But as they grew in ignorance they continued in the belief and practice of more absurd things. The high opinion they justly had of this sacrament, being much raised by the belief in the corporal presence of Christ in it, which came in afterward, then the dull wits of the priests and the wealth of the people were employed to magnify it with all the pomp possible. All the vessels and garments belonging to it were consecrated and anointed with much devotion, the whole office was in an unknown tongue; a great part of it was to be secretly whispered, to make it appear the more wonderful charm; but chiefly the words of consecration were by no means to be heard by the people; it being fabled that when the words were spoken aloud, some shepherds had repeated them over their bread, which was thereupon presently turned into flesh. Besides that, it was but suitable that a change, which was not to be seen, should be made by words not to be heard. The priest was not to approach it, but after so many bowings, crossings, and kissings of the altar. . . Then, after consecration, the bread was lifted up [the " elevation of the host " as it is called],

and all the people worshiped it, as if Christ had appeared in the clouds. It was oft exposed on the altar and carried about in processions, with the ceremonies of carrying flambeaux before it, which the greatest persons accounted it an honor to do; the priest that carried it, all the while going pompously under a rich canopy. This was also thought most effectual for all the accidents of life. And whereas it was first only intended to be a commemoration and communion of the death of Christ, that seemed almost forgotten; but it was applied to all other ends imaginable. That which brought it [" all that trade of massing," as Burnet elsewhere calls it] most custom was trentals, which was a method of delivering souls out of purgatory by saying thirty masses a year for them. And, whereas, it was observed that men on the anniversaries of their birthdays, wedding, or other happy incident of their lives, were commonly in better humor, so that favors were more easily obtained; they seemed to have had the same opinion of God and Christ. So they ordered it that three of these should be said on Christmas Day, three on Epiphany, three on the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, three on the Annunciation, three on the Resurrection, three on the Ascension, three on Whit Sunday, three on Trinity Sunday, three on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and three on her birthday; hoping that these days would be the *mollia tempora,* when God and Christ, or the Blessed Virgin, would be of easier access and more ready to grant their desires. Yet the most unaccountable part of all was the masses on the saints' days, praying that the intercession of the saint might make the sacrifice accept-

able; that the saint for whose honor these oblations were solemnly offered, would by his merits procure them to be accepted, and that the sacrifice might bring to them a greater indulgence, being offered up by the suffrages of the saint. If the sacrifice was of Jesus Christ, and was of its nature expiatory, how this should be done in honor to a saint and become of greater value by his intercession, was a thing very hard to be understood. There were many pieces of ridiculous pageantry also used in it, as the laying the host in the sepulcher they made for Christ on Good Friday; and that, not only the candles that were to burn at the Easter celebration, but that the very fire that was to kindle them, was particularly consecrated to Easter eve. Some masses were believed to have a particular virtue in them; for in the Mass Book, printed at London, anno 1500, there is a mass for avoiding sudden death, which Pope Clement made in the college with all his cardinals, and granting to all who heard it two hundred and seventy days of indulgence, charging that they should hold in their hand a burning candle all the while it was saying, and for five days after should likewise hold a candle, kneeling during the whole mass, and to those that did so sudden death should do no harm. And it was added that this was certain and approved in Avignon [for some time the seat of the rival popes], and all the neighboring places." [18]

Speaking particularly of those "two abuses that had crept into the church," of which "the one was the denying the cup to the laity" and "the other was the

[18] "Hist. Ref. Ch. Eng.," Vol. II, pp. 99-102.

priest's communicating alone," Burnet says: "In the first institution, it is plain, that as Christ bade all drink of the cup, and his disciples all drank of it, so Saint Paul directed every one to examine himself, that he might 'eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.' From thence the church for many ages continued this practice. . . It continued thus till the belief of the corporal presence of Christ was set up; and then the keeping and carrying about the cup in processions not being so easily done, some began to lay it aside. For a great while the bread was given dipped in the cup, to represent a bleeding Christ, as it is in the Greek Church to this day. In other places the laity had the cup given them, but they were to suck it through pipes that nothing of it should fall to the ground. But since they believed that Christ was in every crumb of bread, it was thought needless to give the sacrament in both kinds; so in the Council of Constance the cup was ordered to be denied the laity, though they acknowledged it to have been instituted and practised otherwise. To this the Bohemians would never submit; though to compel them to it much blood was shed in this quarrel. And now, in the Reformation, this was everywhere one of the first things with which the people were possessed—the opposition of the Roman Church herein to the institution of Christ being so manifest. At first this sacrament was also understood to be a communion [participation] of the body and blood of Christ, of which many were to be partakers: while the fervor of devotion lasted, it was thought a scandalous and censurable thing if any had come unto the Christian assemblies and had not stayed to receive the holy mysteries; and the deny-

ing to give any one the sacrament was accounted a very great punishment, so sensible were the Christians of their ill condition when they were hindered to participate of it. But afterward, the former devotion slackening, the good bishops in the fourth and fifth centuries complained often of it, that so few came to receive; yet the custom being to make oblations before the sacrament, out of which the clergy had been maintained during the poverty of the church, the priests had a great mind to keep up the constant use of these oblations, and so persuaded the laity to continue them and to come to the sacrament, though they did not receive it; and in process of time they were made to believe that the priest received in behalf of the whole people. And whereas the sacrament was the commemoration of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and so, by a phrase of speech, was called a sacrifice, they came afterward to fancy that the priest's consecrating and consuming the sacrament was an action of itself expiatory, and that both for the dead and the living. And there rose an infinite number of several sorts of masses. Some were for commemorating the saints, and those were called the masses of such saints; others for a particular blessing—for rain, health, etc., and, indeed, for all the accidents of human life." [19]

3. *Weak and culpable spirit of compliance on the part of the early Christians.*

There were motives on the part of the early Christians, to some extent, perhaps, of an extenuating char-

[19] "Hist. Ref. Ch. of Eng.," pp. 66, 67.

acter, leading to this deep and wide-spread defection from truth. On the one hand, a spirited and zealous disposition, as has been said, to rival and outvie the heathen in some of their most noted religious customs and institutions. On the other, a worthier desire, wofully mistaken in its methods, to propitiate and conciliate them, and thus to win them to Christianity. Nor did they, perhaps, think of the extent to which their politic compliances would be called to go, or foresee the enormities to which they would ultimately lead; else they would, we may be sure, to a greater extent than appears, have emulated the wisdom of that pagan poet who lived a little before their era, and who has bequeathed to the Christian (as well as pagan) world the wise maxim, *Principiis obsta*, "resist the beginnings!" Had they faithfully and firmly followed that invaluable maxim they would have saved the church and the world incalculable evils, among them—to say nothing now of others—that of image worship (in some respects more deplorable than anything in that stupendous system of idolatries which so long had its chief seat in ancient Rome), whose introduction, in its germs at least, by the early Christians, and complete development subsequently, so strikingly illustrates their lamentable lack of the practical wisdom which the maxim so strongly inculcates. "In the purest times of Christianity they had no images at all in their churches," but "afterward, with the rest of the pomp of heathenism, images came to be set up in churches, yet so as that there was no sort of worship paid to them." But the Christians having failed to "resist the beginnings," the fatal wedge had

entered; for, "in such ages of ignorance and superstition, anything that wrought so much on the senses and imaginations of the people was sure to prevail in conclusion; and this has in course of seven more ages been improved by the craft and impostures of the monks, so wonderfully, that there was no sign of divine adoration that could be invented that was not applied to these images." [20]

Mosheim, Waddington, Warburton, and others have exhibited this matter of the weakness and culpability of the early Christians in a very strong and impressive light. "There was," says Mosheim, "a preposterous desire of imitating the pagan rites and of blending them with the Christian worship. The public processions and supplications by which the pagans endeavored to appease their gods, were now adopted into the Christian worship, and celebrated with great pomp and magnificence in several places. The virtues which had formerly been ascribed to the heathen temples, to their lustrations, to the statues of their gods and heroes, were now attributed to Christian churches, to water consecrated by certain forms of prayer, and to the images of holy men. And the same privileges that the former enjoyed under the darkness of paganism, were conferred upon the latter under the light of the gospel, or, rather, under that cloud of superstition that was obscuring its glory. It is true that, as yet, images were not very common; nor were there any statues at all. But it is at the same time as undoubtedly certain, as it is extravagant and monstrous, that the worship of the martyrs was modeled by degrees, according to the

[20] See "Hist. Ref. Ch. Eng.," Vol. II. pp. 14-16.

religious services that were paid to the gods before the coming of Christ." [21]

Recurring to this subject, in another connection, the same distinguished historian says: "The rites and institutions by which the Greeks, Romans, and other nations had formerly testified their religious veneration for fictitious deities, were now adopted, with some slight alterations, by Christian bishops, and employed in the service of the true God. We have already mentioned the reasons alleged for this imitation, so proper to disgust all who have a just sense of the native beauty of genuine Christianity. These fervent heralds of the gospel, whose zeal outran their candor and ingenuity, imagined that the nations would receive Christianity with more facility when they saw the rites and ceremonies to which they were accustomed adopted in the church, and the same worship paid to Christ and his martyrs which they had formerly offered to their idol deities. Hence it happened that in these times [but little more than two centuries after the apostles], the religion of the Greeks and Romans differed very little in external appearance from that of the Christians. Both had a most pompous and splendid ritual. Gorgeous robes, miters, tiaras, wax tapers, crosiers, processions, lustrations, images, gold and silver vases, and many such circumstances of pageantry were equally to be seen in the heathen temples and the Christian churches." [22]

"We have already mentioned," says Dean Waddington, "the copious transfusion of heathen ceremonies

[21] "Ecc. Hist.," Vol. I, p. 282, Maclaine's Edition.
[22] "Ecc. Hist.," Vol. I, pp. 301, 302.

into the Christian worship, which had taken place before the end of the fourth century, and to a certain extent paganized (if we may so express it) the outward form and aspect of religion; those ceremonies became more general and more numerous, and so far as the calamities of the times would permit, more splendid in the age which followed. To console the convert for the loss of his favorite festivals, others, of a different name, but similar description, were introduced." [23]

Alluding to the denunciation of the pagan mysteries by some of the early Fathers, Bishop Warburton says: "But here comes in the strange part of the story: that after this they should so studiously and formally transfer the terms, phrases, rites, ceremonies, and discipline of these odious mysteries into our Holy Religion; and thereby very early vitiate and deprave what a pagan writer (Ammianus Marcellinus) could see and acknowledge to be *absoluta et simplex,* as it came out of the hands of its author. Sure, then, it was for some more than ordinary veneration the people had for all these mysteries that could incline the Fathers of the church to so fatal a counsel; however *the thing is notorious* and the effects have been severely felt." [24]

It was under the influence of this extraordinary "veneration which the people had for the mysteries," as well as, perhaps, from their own secret leanings, in sympathy with the popular mind, and, as we have said, with a desire to propitiate and conciliate opposition, that the early Fathers so largely appropriated terms,

[23] "Church History," p. 118.
[24] "Divine Legation," Vol. I, p. 230.

doctrines, and rites derived from those mysteries, and engrafted them upon Christianity. Under these blended influences they not only called the plain and simple ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper "mysteries," but they also designated them by many other pagan appellations; sometimes even, though more rarely, calling them "orgies." The priests (as they early began, from Judaistic and pagan influences combined, to call the humble ministers of Jesus) bore a variety of pagan titles. Private Christians, also, were distinguished by such titles. And as there were grades in the pagan rites, so the enthusiastic and ambitious Fathers formed, in accordance with them, "grades" in the simple Christian rites—the grades of "purification," of "initiation," and of "consummation." Cicero, a little before the opening of the Christian era, had spoken of the "better hope," with which the Attic mysteries inspired the dying. So the Fathers and leaders of the church more than matched the high claim of the great philosopher and orator on behalf of those celebrated rites; teaching that the "mysteries of Christ"—the "sacraments"—gave "health and everlasting life" to all who participated in them; while for those who neglected them, hope beyond the grave there was none. The authors and abettors of the vain superstitions of the heathen mysteries presumed to claim for their most favored votaries the honors of posthumous deification. So the Christian leaders, determining not to be outdone, claimed for the more conspicuous votaries of their mysteries the same divine honors; maintaining that they who rightly observed them would rise to the dignity and glory of gods in the future

world! The pagans performed their secret rites by night; so, following them, did the Christians perform theirs nocturnally. Some of them spoke glowingly of the "most splendid night of vigils." As the heathen had their *tesserae* (passwords, or tokens, for mutual recognition at their secret assemblages and feasts), so the early Christians had their *tesserae* too, for a like purpose. The heathen, dismissing from their sacred assemblies the uninitiated, employed a fixed formula, and cried out, *Procul este profani!*—"Away ye profane ones!" So too the Christians had their formula of dismission; and, before their "secret and terror-striking mysteries" opened, cried out, through their herald, the "Levite" or deacon, *Omnes catechumeni, foras discedite, omnes possessi, omnes non initiati!*—"Depart from the sacred precincts, all ye catechumens, all possessed (energumens), all not initiated!" The solemn silence and reserve maintained with respect to the deeper secrets of their mysteries by the pagan hierophants were closely imitated by the Christian teachers of the early church. The more sacred of the holy things of the heathen, the incommunicable things (*τὰ ἀπόρρητα*) were made known to the more advanced votaries alone; while the communicable (*τὰ ἔκφορα*) might be taught to others. So the Fathers of the church had their communicable and their incommunicable things, their *ἔκφορα*, and their *ἀπόρρητα*, the priestly manipulation of the latter of which was, at a later day, called *disciplina arcani*, the "discipline of the secret." In addition to all this, it is to be remarked, that the heathen had in connection with their mysteries not only "vigils," but the "confessional," "penance," and

" probation," preparatory to initiation into the greater mysteries, and strikingly resembling that of the catechumens, or candidates for baptism and initiation into the church and its mysteries. Not found in the holy Scriptures, nor yet in the earliest tradition of the church, it is not difficult to conceive whence these noted observances were derived.

Warburton, having quoted from Casaubon's " Sixteenth Exercitation on the Annals of Baronius " the passage from which many of the foregoing statements are substantially derived, proceeds to say: " But the worst part of the story is still behind, which the concluding words of the quotation will not suffer me to pass over in silence. These Fathers used so strange a language in speaking of the Last Supper that it gave occasion to a corrupt and barbarous church, in after times to ingraft upon it a doctrine more stupendously absurd and blasphemous than ever issued from the mouth of a pagan priest." [25]

Edgar, having spoken of " the use and worship of images, adopted from gnosticism or gentilism," as an " ugly excrescence," and adventitious " appendage of Christianity," briefly indicates the stages, under the ever-intensifying spirit of paganism, of that idolatrous practice which we have already briefly mentioned: " The veneration of the cross and of relics," he says, " was first introduced. The emblem of redemption, or the remains of a saint, were preserved with a superstitious devotion. The portrait or the statue of the saint or the Saviour succeeded, as more striking memorials of holiness or salvation. The painted or sculptured

[25] " Div. Leg.," Vol. I, pp. 390, 391. Note II on Book Second.

effigy, introduced, indeed, with caution, was allowed to adorn the oratory, instruct the ignorant, warm the frigid, or gratify the prepossessions of the convert from gentilism. The new portraits and statues, though executed in defiance of taste, spread from east to west; gratified the imagination of the superstitious, . . and finally received the adoration of the delighted and degraded votary." [26]

Intimately connected with the veneration, adoration, and worship of their images and relics, is the culmination of this idolatrous superstition in the canonization of the saints, the counterpart of the heathen apotheosis, or deification of their heroes and other illustrious men. "It has been common," says Bishop Hopkins, "to prefix to the words of the Fathers the very word which the classical writers among the Latins attached to their deified mortals, *Divus*. Thus, as the old heathen Roman said, *Divus Augustus*, the god Augustus, when speaking of the deified emperor, so the modern Christian Roman saith, *Divus Thomas,* the god Thomas, *Divus Bernadus*, the god Bernadus, when speaking of the canonized saints. The ancient apotheosis, in which the deceased hero was enrolled among the gods by the heathen, has been succeeded by the papal canonization, through which the deceased is supposed to become a lawful object of invocation in heaven. And thus the saints of Rome occupy, in some important respects, the place of the old *Dii minorum gentium*, being, according to Bellarmine, gods by participation." [27]

[26] "Variations of Popery," pp. 470, 471.
[27] "End of Controversy Controverted," Vol. II, pp. 55, 56.

Neander, though he never fails, with his sweet and generous charity, to make out the best case possible for the early Christians, evincing no sympathy with any who might be inclined, in questionable cases, to find evidence of their culpable conformity with paganism, the light of his own pure and loving spirit constantly softening and relieving the darkest shades of their character and conduct, is yet constrained by his superior regard for truth, to add the weight of his great name to the overwhelming evidence of that preposterous emulation and imitation of the pagans, which so early and so signally marked the worship of the post-apostolic church and so grossly corrupted and perverted its ordinances. Discussing the Lord's Supper, he speaks of "the comparison that was made between the Christian worship and the Grecian mysteries," and of the "transference of the conception of the mysteries to the Holy Supper," by the early Christians; and of the opinion thus engendered, and widely prevalent among them, that "one ought not to speak of those holy things before the uninitiated." [28] Speaking of the confession of faith of the primitive Christians as made orally, rather than in writing, he says: "In later times a disposition to dip into mysteries quite alien from the spirit of the simple gospel, which disposition had first found entrance into the Alexandrian Church, from her leaning to an accommodation with the pagan mysteries, and from the influence of the Neo-Platonic mysticism, gave to this custom the meaning that the most sacred things ought not to be entrusted to writing [a hint at the *rationale,* as well as at one of the most affluent

[28] "Hist. Ch. Rel. and Ch.," Vol. I, pp. 327, (note) 328, 329.

sources of the papal doctrine of 'tradition'], lest they should be produced among the uninitiated, and thereby become profaned—while yet the Scripture, the holiest tradition of the divine, might come into the hands of every heathen, and while the apologist felt no scruples in presenting before the heathen the inmost mysteries of Christian doctrine!" In a note upon the passage last cited, the great historian further remarks: "The like play and parade about mysteries, to which more importance came to be attached than they originally possessed, afterward led to the invention of the obscure, vague, and unhistorical idea of a *disciplina arcani* [regimen of mystery, 'discipline of the secret'], of which, from its very vagueness and want of foundation, men could make whatever they pleased." [29]

4. *Erroneous appellation of the rite.*

In view of the all-pervading influence of paganism upon the early Christians, of its deplorable effects upon them, and of their weak and culpable spirit of compliance as depicted in the preceding pages, we more than suspect that among the many unscriptural and baleful things referred to by Coleman and Hall, and the other learned writers whom we have quoted, which the post-apostolic church connected with Christianity, all tending to its corruption and the perversion of its ordinances, the great ecclesiastical and theological error of nomenclature, upon which we have so strongly animadverted, had place; that the calling of the com-

[29] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 308. See also Cardinal Wiseman's "Lectures on the Doctrines of the Church," Vol. I, p. 120; Vol. II, p. 180.

memoration of Christ the communion had a pagan origin.

Through misapprehension of Paul's before-mentioned use of the term *κοινωνία* (in which, as in other instances, impelled and guided by an unerring inspiration—which the post-apostolic Fathers did not have—he appropriated as fair spoil a pagan Greek idea, and wisely employed it in illustration and enforcement of his argument) in connection with the all-pervading and potent Hellenic and heathen influences then prevailing, the error might very naturally and easily have arisen.

Turretin (who, taking the prevailing view of the Lord's Supper, calls it the communion), referring to Paul's particular use of the word *κοινωνία*, in 1 Corinthians 10 : 16, after affirming, as we have seen, that the apostle did not intend by it to give name to the ordinance, and stating the special sense in which he employs the term, says, respecting the free construction of his language by some of the Fathers, *Hinc factum ut patres passim*, etc., "Hence it was that the Fathers [of the fourth century and later] generally designated the whole observance by the name of the communion." Specially alluding to Dionysius the Areopagite, and to Chrysostom (Greek Fathers), he says that Dionysius (or rather, let us say, the author, in the fourth century, or later, of the spurious writings which bear his name) designated the Supper as "the mystery of the congregation or assembly (*συνάξεως*), or of the communion"—that is, according to Greek ideas and Greek *usus loquendi*, the mystery of "the fellowship," or "brotherhood"—and that Chrysostom called it "the spiritual and tremendous communion of the mysteries"; the

golden-mouthed Father, as well as the counterfeit Dionysius, like so many others, under the warping influences affecting them, misinterpreting the apostle and so misconceiving the nature and design of the rite.[30]

In the second and third centuries the terms *κοινωνία* and *communio* (communion) seem, according to Origen, not to have been used of the Lord's Supper particularly, but only, in a general sense, of Christian fellowship.[31] In the fourth and succeeding centuries, as we learn from Augustine, Basil the Great, and others,[32] they were employed for the act of taking the Supper, and for the elements, and so for the Supper itself; though its more general appellation among the Greeks, especially, for a considerable time had been, and still continued to be, besides that of the Eucharist (*εὐχαριστία*) the purely pagan one (*τὸ τέλειον*), "the finishing, perfecting, consummating rite—the perfection."[33]

Thus we see that the terms *κοινωνία* and *communio* (communion), not used at all as appellations of the Lord's Supper in the Apostolic age, and employed chiefly to signify fellowship in general among Christians for some time thereafter, gradually assumed a technical sense in relation to the rite, until they became in process of time its fixed appellations.

How this was most probably brought about is a mat-

[30] Turretini Op., Tom. B, *De Sacra Coena*, Quaest, xvi., p. 361. Edinburgh Edition.

[31] Orig., III, 485, B.

[32] Aug., III, on Matt. 6 : 11: "Qui non quotidie coenae dominicae communicant." *Contra Cresconium*, 3, 35: "Si in communione sacramentorum mali maculant bonos." Sulpicius Severus, II, 37: "Athanasius [Marcellum] a communione suspendit." Basil the Great, IV, 800: Ὁ κλέπτης ἑνιαυτὸν κωλυθήσεται μόνον τῆς κοινωνίας τῶν ἁγιασμάτων. Joannes Damascenus, *De Fide Orthod.*, IV, 13: Διὰ τὸ κοινωνεῖν ὑμᾶς δι' αὐτῆς τῷ χριστῷ . . . καὶ ἑνοῦσθαι ἀλλήλοις.

[33] "Hammond on the Canons," p. 157.

ter of no little interest and importance, and we trust we shall be pardoned for considering it somewhat at length.

Discussing the ancient and universal rite of sacrifice, the learned Bishop Warburton says: "This important rite, first dictated by natural reason [should we not rather say, derived from the earliest, however obscure, tradition?], did not long continue in its original integrity. Of all the customs in use amongst men, those respecting religion are most liable to abuse. For the passions of hope and fear become then most inordinate when the mind is taken up and occupied in the offices of divine worship. At this season the sobriety of common sense is often forced to give way to the extravagance of the imagination. . . Sacrifice being a scenical rite, it was principally fitted to strike the fancy; which, delighting in paradox and mystery, would riot in this enchanted ground till it had lost sight of the simple meaning of a plain expressive action. . . Under this state of delusion, eucharistical and propitiatory sacrifices were soon imagined to receive their chief value from the costliness of the offering; and hecatombs were supposed more acceptable to heaven than purity of mind, adorned with gratitude and humble reliance on the Deity. . . Pomp of sacrifice was everywhere preferred to the piety of the offerer. . . But, in expiatory sacrifices, matters went still worse. For in these, the passion of fear being predominant, strange enormities were soon superadded to the follies of the worshipers." [34]

Though employed in reference to the general rite of

[34] "Divine Legation of Moses," Vol. III, pp. 375, 376.

sacrifice, our author's words have, we think, a special and forcible application to the Lord's Supper, as conceived and celebrated by the church of the second and third centuries, and later. For it was, by multitudes, regarded as a sacrifice, eucharistical, propitiatory, expiatory, and its observance had become preeminently "scenical."

The assumption of false principles is intimately connected with the assumption and acceptance of false terms, or of terms used in false senses. "How much," says Isaac Taylor, "turns often (and it is an observation perpetually offering itself in the perusal of church history) upon an insensible substitution of a technical for the general and genuine sense of an ethical term. It was just by the aid of some of these hardly perceptible substitutions that the ready means were found of gaining an apparently scriptural warranty for practices flagrantly contravening the spirit and meaning of scriptural morality." [35]

How applicable this general statement of the learned Church of England layman, Isaac Taylor, to the particular case in hand, the substitution of the technical sense of the term "communion" for "the general and genuine sense" of the Lord's Supper!

Many terms, taken from the pagan vocabulary (by men not inspired like Paul and the other writers of the New Testament, nor pure and wise as they, who sometimes, by divine impulse and under divine guidance, employed pagan terms and pagan ideas, and so indicated and fixed the limit of their use), conveying false and injurious ideas, were early incorporated into

[35] "Ancient Christianity," p. 116.

the literature of the church. Chrysostom speaks of Peter as the praefect of the universal church—thus making way with his splendid eloquence and vast influence for the fixed, but false, idea (then and for some time earlier rapidly forming) of his supremacy, as well as primacy, over a world-wide ecclesiastical empire. The calling of his supposed successors by titles Peter never knew, Pope (*πάππας*, Papa), Sovereign Pontiff (Pontifex Maximus), etc., as well as the calling of a local church (the Church of Rome, over which they presided)—from the very nature of things a limited organization—the Catholic or Universal (*καθολική*) Church (thus, as Barrow wittily says, "committing a bull, implying Rome and the universe to be the same place)," [36] was a natural sequence, followed fast, and ultimately brought about general acquiescence in the enormous and unparalleled usurpation.

The term mysteries (*μυστήρια*), in its pagan sense, was early applied to the doctrines and ordinances of the gospel, and indeed to the whole Christian system. "The profound respect that was paid to the Greek and Roman mysteries," says Mosheim, "and the extraordinary sanctity that was attributed to them, was a further circumstance that induced the Christians to give their religion a mystic air, in order to put it on an equal footing, in point of dignity with that of the pagans. For this purpose they gave the name of mysteries to the institutions of the gospel, and decorated particularly the Holy Sacrament (the Lord's Supper) with that solemn title. They used in that sacred institution, as also in that of baptism, several of the terms

[36] Barrow's "Works," Vol. III, p. 201.

employed in the heathen mysteries; and proceeded so far at length as even to adopt some of the rites and ceremonies of which these renowned mysteries consisted. This imitation began in the eastern provinces; but after the time of Adrian, who first introduced the mysteries among the Latins, it was followed by the Christians who dwelt in the western part of the empire. A great part, therefore, of the service of the church in this century [the second] had a certain air of the heathen mysteries, and resembled them considerably in many particulars." [37]

The word sacrament (*sacramentum*), which has so much mystified, by the various senses in which it has been employed, both the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, as well as the minds of men, furnishes another signal instance of the derivation by the Christian Fathers of famous ecclesiastical terms from pagan sources. The original Latin word (*sacramentum*) meant an oath, "on account of its sacred nature," particularly the military oath. The "comparison of their vocation to a military service," being, as Neander says, "a favorite one" among the early Christians, the word was generally used by them in this sense, in connection with the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; they thus intending to signify that in receiving these rites they virtually took "the Christian's military oath," by which "they bound themselves to live and fight as soldiers of God and of Christ." [38] The word also signified among the Romans a sum of money deposited as a forfeit in litigated cases, and which "was

[37] "Ecc. Hist.," Vol. I, pp. 464, 465. Maclaine's Edition.
[38] "Hist. Ch. Rel. and Ch.," Vol. I, pp. 307-309.

devoted to sacred uses." In ecclesiastical Latinity the term assumed through pagan Greek and other influences a new meaning, and was employed as the equivalent of *μυστήριον* (mystery), a term signifying any "secret and unknown thing," and employed by the Greek Christians "to denote not only the profound and incomprehensible doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, but also baptism and the Lord's Supper, and especially the latter, which was called *ἅγιον μυστήριον* (the holy mystery), partly, no doubt, because under external symbols spiritual blessings were veiled, but partly also on account of the secret manner in which it was celebrated. As the heathen had their mysteries, to which none but the initiated were admitted, so the church came, at an early period, to allow none to be present when the Lord's Supper was administered but the baptized; and heathens, Jews, excommunicated persons, and catechumens were excluded." [39] The word "was adopted the more willingly by the Fathers, because they were accustomed to compare the doctrines and rites of Christianity with the doctrines and ceremonies of the pagan mysteries, in order to secure for them a higher regard and authority among the heathen." [40]

Even the common conception by the early Christians of the horrid stake and transverse beam on which Jesus died, and their use of the cross (*crux*, *σταυρός*)—the fruitful source of so many egregious errors and monstrous superstitions—seem to have been far more pagan than Christian. The sense of *σταυρός* and *crux*,

[39] Dick's "Lectures on Theology," Vol. II, pp. 353, 354.
[40] Knapp's "Theology," p. 480.

cross, as used by the Greek and Roman writers in their higher and broader sense, is very different from that they bear when applied to the post or tree on which his enemies impaled the Son of God. "The cross was used emblematically before the Christian era. Upon a multitude of medals and ancient monuments are to be found crosses placed in the hands of statues of Victory and of figures of emperors. It was also placed upon a globe, which, ever since the days of Augustus, has been the sign of the empire of the world and the image of victory. The shields, the cuirasses, the helmets, the imperial cap, were all thus decorated."[41] The malefactor's cross in the time of Christ "was simply a piece of wood fastened across a tree or upright post, on which were executed criminals of the very worst character."[42] Hence, Peter, in his great pentecostal discourse charged the Jews with having slain and hanged Jesus "on a tree."[43] In his first general Epistle he uses the same expression, "He bore our sins in his own body, on the tree."[44] Paul too, more than once employs it.[45]

The handsome cross, formed of ebony, of ivory, or of gold, used as a charm and amulet, as well as ornament, by highly imaginative, sentimental, and superstitious Christians—in its simple but striking form furnishing, at a later time, the outline model for their churches and cathedrals—the adored cross, worn near the heart of the sad-visaged monk and the lonely eremite; pendent from the neck of woman; engraved

[41] Enc. Americana, Art. "Cross." [42] Ibid.
[43] Acts 5 : 30; 10 : 39. [44] 1 Peter 2 : 24.
[45] See Acts 13 : 29 and Gal. 3 : 13, in connection with Deut. 21 : 23.

or embossed on the shield of the soldier and of the gallant knight; adorning the proud escutcheons of prince and of noble; emblazoned on the waving banners of triumphant armies; surmounting the turrets and spires, towers and domes of gorgeous temples—this was a very different thing; not half, nor a hundredth part so like "the accursed tree," the rude and miserable frame, the savage gibbet, on which hung the "Prince of Life," as it was like the beautiful Greek or Latin cross of the poets and mythologists—a graceful and attractive symbol of the generative principle, of victory, and of empire. The Emperor Constantine erected "in the midst of Rome his own statue bearing a cross in its right hand, with an inscription which referred the victory of his arms, and the deliverance of Rome, to the virtue of that salutary sign—the true symbol of force and courage. The same symbol sanctified the arms of the soldiers of Constantine; the cross glittered on their helmets, was engraved on their shields, was interwoven into their banners; and the consecrated emblems which adorned the person of the emperor himself were distinguished only by richer materials and more exquisite workmanship." The imperial standard, "*the Labarum,* an obscure though celebrated name, which has been vainly derived from almost all the languages of the world, supported a crown of gold, which enclosed the mysterious monogram, at once expressive of the figure of the cross and the initial letters of the name of Christ." [46]

Employed as it was by the pagans, it had a far nobler use than that to which it was subsequently often

[46] "Decline and Fall of Roman Empire," Vol. II, pp. 260, 261.

so profanely consecrated. Though having then no recognized connection with the idea of death, but rather with that of life, it may be regarded as a widely diffused and striking prophecy, perhaps, of the rise and progress, the greatness and glory of the empire of Him who, though he was to be so cruelly and ignominiously crucified, was to win in his seeming defeat his highest victory, and out of death to bring everlasting life. But while it subserved this glorious end, it also subserved the humbler one of showing how came from pagan rather than from Christian sources the early conception and the practice of those who, more imbued with idealism and sentiment and superstition than with the spirit of genuine devotion, were more captivated by the splendid symbolical and typical prophecy than by the plainer, though infinitely sublimer, literal fulfilment itself.

Carried away with the enthusiasm of such conceptions, transported by the fervors of religious devotion, and also moved by the desire to excuse and give color to their veneration, not to say adoration, of the mere material cross, " the Christian writers, Justin, Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Jerome, and Maximus of Turin, have investigated with tolerable success the figure or likeness of a cross in almost every object of nature or of art—in the intersection of the meridian and equator, the human face, a bird flying, a man swimming, a mast and yard, a plow, a standard, etc." [47]

Now, if many of the post-apostolic Christians were so deeply imbued with the spirit of paganism, and so readily adopted heathen ideas and conceptions, terms,

[47] " Decline and Fall," Vol. II, p. 260, note.

doctrines, institutions, religious rites and practices, which we have mentioned, with many others which it were tedious to name, is it to be at all wondered at if they derived the idea of the *κοινωνία* (the fellowship, and its communion), as it was applied to the Lord's Supper, from the same source; and that *ἡ κοινωνία*—(the fellowship, the communion)—early became stereotyped as the fixed and unfortunate designation of our Lord's great memorial rite? Such an instance of their adoption of pagan ideas, and a pagan form of expression, is as nothing when compared with other instances of pagan conformity which we have given.

But let us look at this matter with closer attention to detail.

There were, among the ancient heathen, certain societies or brotherhoods, referred to by Catullus, Cicero, Tacitus, and others which were called by the Greeks and the Romans, respectively, *κοινωνίαι*, and *sodalitia* (fellowships). Cicero, viewing some of those brotherhoods chiefly in their social and festive aspects, has called them "banqueting clubs," though he also speaks of their rites in honor of the gods. Tacitus, regarding them rather in their religious than in their social character, and, perhaps, alluding to others than these mentioned by Cicero, has represented them as composed of "a sort of priests, who formed together a college."

Many of these fellowships had rites and ceremonies similar to those of the more august and renowned "mysteries" of which we have spoken. In honor of their particular divinities, they had rich and splendid feasts, and performed the most solemn and imposing services.

Participation in the feast of the fellowship and in its accompanying rites, according to Chandler, took the name of the fellowship itself. "The Greeks, likewise," says he, in his note on Ephesians 5 : 11, "used the word κοινωνία to denote a participation in their religious rites and mysteries, and in the benefits supposed to be procured by them." [48]

Admission to the superb banquets and captivating ceremonials of the fellowship was regarded as a most distinguished privilege, and only the initiated, as in the case of the more general and famous mysteries, were permitted to enjoy it. Multitudes of their pagan votaries became Christians, especially after the conversion of the Emperor Constantine to Christianity, early in the fourth century; before which time we have seen that the Lord's Supper had not generally received the fixed appellation of the communion, while soon thereafter it began extensively to prevail. Many of the old ideas and old sympathies of these Christianized pagans still remained, and clung tenaciously to them. Waddington, alluding to this rapid influx of heathen converts into the church, says: "These naturally sought in the new religion for any resemblance to the popular ceremonies of the old." [49] They felt, when they gave in their adhesion to Christ, that they must have their Christian, as they had had their pagan κοινωνία (fellowship), and conform the feast in honor of Jesus, the head and divinity of their new "fellowship," to that in honor of their former divinities. Now they found in the church a ready-made "fellowship," and in the

[48] See MacKnight on the Epistles, 1 John 1: 3, Note 3; Eph. 5: 2, Note 1.
[49] "History of the Church," p. 154.

Lord's Supper its appropriate feast. And as they had called their heathen rites "mysteries," and invested them with the utmost sacredness, and had excluded from participation in them and in the feasts with which they were connected all but the initiated; so, after becoming Christians, they, and all under their influence, rivaling and outdoing the unconverted heathen, even in their "greater mysteries," called the Lord's Supper and its "concomitants" not only mysteries, but mysteries "terrible," "astounding," "ineffable," upon which, even the hierarchies of heaven could not look without fear and trembling; and, with an austere and rigorous strictness, excluded all but the "initiated" (the members of the church), not only from participation in them, but even from witnessing them. They preached before others, sang and read the Scriptures before them, and gave various instructions to the catechumens or probationers, but the house was cleared with the imperative formula, already noticed, when they commenced the mysterious preliminaries and awful adjuncts of the "dreadful feast" of the church, their new *κοινωνία*, or fellowship. Then those initiated into the "tremendous mysteries" of the new religion, and who composed the Christian *κοινωνία*, or fellowship, after various mystical and magical manipulations by the priests, broke bread and drank wine together. And the feast which they thus celebrated, after the manner of the pagan fellowship, readily took the name, as the former feast had done, of the *κοινωνία*, or fellowship, or the communion.

And thus the Supper of the Lord came to be regarded, in the language of the devout and erudite

Isaac Taylor,[50] as "a communion with the church," or "the rite which signified and sealed that communion," rather than as the sacred and divine rite which commemorated Christ and the great salvation wrought by him for mankind.

Now, in view of the instances adduced of emulation and imitation of the heathen by the early Christians, their adoption of pagan ideas, terms, doctrines, rites, and ceremonies innumerable; in view of the *usus loquendi* of the New Testament writers respecting our Lord's great commemorative rite, according to which, while that rite is referred to as the Lord's Supper,[51] "the breaking of bread," [52] and "the Lord's table," [53] it is never, as a rite, called "the communion" (the single instance of the use, in connection with the Supper, of the term *κοινωνία* having been shown to furnish no warrant for so naming the rite); in view of the fact that the idea of fellowship between believers, not prominent, if involved at all, in 1 Corinthians 10 : 16, 17, is not elsewhere prominent in connection with the ordinance, but that, on the other hand, another idea is conspicuously so; in view of the prevalent spirit of self-exaggeration of which we have spoken, and from which, certainly, the early Christians were not exempt; in view of all this we respectfully submit that it is extremely improbable, indeed impossible, that the name in question should have come from the New Testament, or from apostolic usage; and that it is, therefore, naturally and logically (as we think we have shown that it is historically) to be traced to the source

[50] "Anc. Christ.," p. 139.
[51] 1 Cor. 11 : 20.
[52] Acts 2 : 42, 46; 20 : 7, 11.
[53] 1 Cor. 10 : 21.

which we have indicated with some particularity in the preceding pages.

Accepting these views, all those who sincerely subscribe to the renowned declaration of the great Chillingworth, "The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants!" [54] will, consistently, give its true designation to our Lord's memorial rite, and discourage its supersedure, with that of the great object of the rite, by an inappropriate and unscriptural appellation, against which are so many cogent reasons, already to some extent indicated, but which we now proceed, a little more formally and particularly, yet briefly, to state.

[54] Chillingworth's "Works," Vol. II, p. 410. Oxford Edition.

III

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS

While, as we have so fully seen in previous sections of this treatise, there is no sufficient reason for regarding the Lord's Supper as the rite of mutual fellowship between believers, or even, primarily and formally, with Christ himself, and of therefore naming it the communion, there are direct and positive reasons, and reasons of great weight, against it; which, though for the most part constantly implied in our foregoing discussion, we think it important to give more explicit and summary statement.

1. The word is ambiguous. In the Apostolic age it was applied to the contributions made by Christians in aid of their poorer brethren. "It hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia," says Paul, "to make a certain contribution (*κοινωνία*) for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem." [1] It was likewise applied to contributions for other purposes. In the third and fourth centuries it was employed to denote *union in prayer*.[2] It was also used to designate the performance of ecclesiastical functions.[3] And it is still constantly applied to other things besides the sacred Supper. We have communion with Christ and with his people, as we have seen, in the proper observance of the ordinance

[1] Rom. 15 : 26. [2] "Curtis on Communion," pp. 79, 80.
[3] See "Hammond on the Canons," pp. 50, 51.

of baptism. Why then, as we have before asked, might not that divine rite, as well as the Supper, be called the communion? The breadth and pliability of import and of application which pertain to this term constitute, of themselves, a sufficient reason against the employment of it as the special and fixed appellation of the Supper or, indeed, of any single rite or service whatever. Such an unwise and illogical, as well as unscriptural, use of it, has caused the utmost confusion of ideas in the Christian world, and produced an incalculable amount of profitless and damaging discussion, as well as other evils of the greatest magnitude.

2. This term as applied to the Lord's Supper, cannot, as we have seen, stand the test of the axiomatic principle stated at the beginning of this discussion. It is not, as a name, strictly significant of the thing named. It does not properly represent and define it. Instead of clearly expressing the great essential idea of the sacred rite, as a commemoration of Christ, his sufferings and death, and the great salvation achieved through them for his people, it obscures that idea. Nay, it substitutes for it another and totally different idea.

3. It involves the error of putting the incidental and accidental for the necessary and essential, the special for the general, the particular for the universal—the error of regarding the celebration together by believers of the Lord's Supper, which is at best but a particular act of fraternal love and recognition, as the great all-embracing demonstration of Christian fellowship and sympathy.

4. Exalting the united celebration of the Supper

above all other exhibitions of fellowship and sympathy, it most unreasonably, as well as unscripturally, makes it the test of their value. The sweetest and noblest communion is, as we have said, an active, intelligent, and voluntary exercise of the soul, a matter of mental and spiritual consciousness. Such communion is enjoyed in loving converse and companionship, and in a thousand acts of united work and worship. But all these, it appears, must go for nothing if there be no united celebration of the Lord's Supper, no "communion" at the table of the Lord.

5. While partaking together of the holy feast by those who celebrate it is, as we have said in other connections, only one of the many things in which communion with Christ and with his people may be enjoyed, and by no means the chief; it is made, by the error in question, to usurp and monopolize the character and appellation properly appertaining to all the modes and forms of Christian communion and fellowship.

6. The offspring of error, it has been itself fruitful of errors. It has led to grave and lamentable mistakes respecting the nature, the administration, and the proper participants of the sacred Supper:

(1) Giving, as we have seen in one aspect of the rite, exaggerated views of its observance as a mysterious and inexplicably beneficial communion with Christ, the false name it bears, with the error it embodies, has led to special exhibitions and administrations of the Supper, for which there is neither apostolic precept nor example. Representing it as possessed of essential intrinsic efficacy, and as being in some sort

even necessary to salvation, the false idea conveyed by that potent but erroneous appellation has led to private administrations of the ordinance to the aged and infirm, to the sick and the dying—as if necessary to their future, as well as present, spiritual well-being—and to both public and private administrations of it, as a means of saving grace to the unregenerate and the unbelieving. In the early ages, the error which has enshrined itself in that false name even led, in some instances, to the practice of a private self-administration of the rite. Basil the Great, living and writing in the fourth century, said that in emergencies it was lawful for one to administer to himself the sacred elements, "to take the communion with his own hand." [4]

As we have seen, it has led, in connection with other hurtful influences, to greater evils still—such as the idea of a simple commemoration of Christ could never have done—to the most monstrous extravagances and superstitions that could be conceived; to the Romish dogma of transubstantiation, with all the ridiculous and shocking mummeries and deadly errors of the "mass"; to the Lutheran dogma of "consubstantiation"; to the scarcely less absurd and preposterous conceits of Puseyism; as well as to the errors of those, of whatever party, who suppose the simple rite to possess in itself a divine and saving efficacy.

(2) Regarding the rite, in another aspect of it, as essentially an intercommunion of believers, it has led, along with erroneous conceptions of the nature of the church, to a generally loose and lawless practice respecting it, which cannot, we think, be too deeply

[4] Basil, IV, 485: τὴν κοινωνίαν λαμβάνειν τῇ ἰδίᾳ χειρί.

deprecated. It has been assumed that all who love the Lord, and who love his people, have the right to manifest their love to him and to them at his table, without regard to any other scriptural qualification. Hence persons of widely differing Christian sects, and of no sect at all, have been often brought together, promiscuously, under the auspices of some misjudging body of Christians, to celebrate the holy ordinance. Thus has the rite, which Christ bequeathed as a precious heritage to his organized and visible church alone, been carried beyond its pale, and administered indiscriminately to heterogeneous masses of men, without any determinate and proper ecclesiastical organization, to the subversion of order and the sacrifice of the purity of religion.

(3) Combining both classes of views just indicated, the error involved in the false appellation of the Supper has sometimes led to extraordinary celebrations of it by convocations of men and women of various sects and nationalities, for which there is no scriptural warrant. Great mixed multitudes, without any proper church organization at all, improvise, or elaborately arrange, the most imposing observances of the simple church rite, as if those promiscuous multitudes were actual churches of Christ and even entitled to more than ordinary church privileges and honors.

To many this may seem broad, beautiful, and eminently Christian; but whatever of beauty there may be about it is a false beauty, that of error rather than truth, of disorder rather than order; its breadth, liberality, large-hearted charity, the product rather of human sentiment and conventional usage than the

fruit of the holy truth and the Holy Spirit of God, which, all-consistent and harmonious, can never be at issue with themselves.

7. The error under consideration, while assuming to exalt, really degrades the holy ordinance; while claiming to honor, it dishonors our Lord. It raises the human element in the celebration of the rite higher than the divine. It virtually puts his people before and above Christ himself. It makes communion with them more prominent than commemoration of him.

8. Inciting to unworthy clamors for the exhibition of a liberality that is not genuine, but often utterly spurious, it cultivates in many instances a spirit of narrowness and bigotry, and often leads to cruel misrepresentation, and even persecution, of many of the faithful followers of Christ.

9. In the interest, ostensibly, of harmony and peace, of love and sympathy, it often excites antipathies, and stirs up bitterness and strife between those who are brethren and should at least be friends.

10. In fine, failing to realize, practically, the promised benefits of its theory, this great error causes the world to scoff and gainsay, obstructs the propagation of the truth, retards the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom, and hinders the salvation of perishing souls.

Thus have we shown by numerous special and weighty reasons, as well as by our whole general discussion, that the prime object of the Lord's Supper being to commemorate the sufferings and death of Christ on behalf of his people, and not to testify their fellowship with each other, or even with himself, the holy rite is improperly called the communion.

IV

PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE CORRECTION

That the practical value of the correction which we have suggested and so strenuously urged, would be very great if universally made, is clearly shown in the foregoing "Summary of Arguments," as well as in our whole preceding discussion, and will still further appear in the light of additional statements which we make at the risk of a little repetition. The evil involved in the false terminology of the Lord's Supper has been, and is, immense. If the original idea of commemoration had not been virtually and practically superseded by that of communion, the stupendous abuses and corruption of the rite, as seen in the Romish mass of a later day (the culmination and climax of its perversion), would, we think, never have taken place. Commemoration of Christ in the observance of the rite is a simple idea, at once comprehended and appreciated by the humblest intelligence. It gives no scope for vague and shadowy, indefinite and misleading subtleties. There is nothing metaphysical or mystical about it. It furnishes no nidus or covert for false theories and speculations, no incitement or provocative to their indulgence. Of the obscure and complex idea of communion with Him, in its observance, the very reverse is true. Hence all the contradictory and confusing hypotheses, subtleties, and sophistries con-

nected with the question of the Lord's Supper in the latter, rather than in the former view of it. All these would have been precluded; could never, indeed, have arisen in connection with the rite, regarded only as a simple remembrancer or memorial of Christ. It was through this haziness and vagueness, under the veil of this indefiniteness and uncertainty to which we have referred, that dreamy, visionary minds, tainted with the Gnostic and Neoplatonic mysticism, long incubating, hatched that brood of wild vagaries, which some of their sharper and shrewder brethren of a later day, always looking after the "main chance," ever seeking the furtherance of their own selfish ambition and lust of gain, ultimately turned to high account, in that theological and ecclesiastical monstrosity, the sacrifice of the mass, utterly unknown to the holy Scriptures and to Christianity. They probably reasoned thus: If the purpose of the Lord's Supper be the communion of his people with Christ, then, the more intimate that communion, the better for the communicants and the more the holy rite would be magnified and honored; and what communion with him could be so close and so complete as an amalgamation, miscegenation, as it were, with him; the actual incorporation and blending, by eating and drinking the consecrated elements, of his body and blood, soul and divinity, with their own bodies, and souls, and whole being? Feeding on divine food would make themselves substantially divine, literally, "members of his body, of his flesh, and his bones"; partakers, indeed, of his whole nature, sharers of his divinity, and ultimately, as it were, to use the words of Cardinal Bellarmine, cited in another place,

"gods by participation." So, we have said, some of them perhaps reasoned. And thus, in part at least, we may well think arose the revolting dogma of transubstantiation, with all its marvelous mental and moral absurdities, all its abominations of deceit and fraud, blasphemy and sacrilege.

Only less absurd and monstrous than the doctrine of transubstantiation is that of consubstantiation, which was Luther's futile device to escape from one stupendous error (which, during his connection with the hierarchy, had thoroughly enslaved him), by flying to another only less stupendous. The latter was born of the former, and both were the progeny of that false conception of the rite, as an inexplicable and mysterious communion with Christ.

It is remarkable how many other perversions of the Lord's Supper have sprung from, or are otherwise closely connected with, that most unfortunate one, which found its expression in the false name of the rite. But it is accordant with the universal law of reproduction, and especially with that manifestation of it in which, under certain conditions, the worst and most pestiferous germs are the most prolific. From a single seed comes a great harvest. Many who do not subscribe to the greater and grosser perversion of transubstantiation, or of consubstantiation, yet hold that Christ is actually present, *in propria persona*, in his very body and blood, soul and divinity, in some mysterious and miraculous way, with the bread and wine, and is thus personally appropriated, they know not how, whenever they partake of them; and that he thus invests the rite with a divine virtue and efficacy, which

it otherwise would not and could not have. Some of the most noted Christian teachers and leaders of the sixteenth century, when Protestantism was in its formative state, held such views as these, and their influence is still widely and powerfully felt. But, let it never be forgotten that the unerring Wisdom teaches that "great men are not always wise," and that we cannot safely trust in man nor in the son of man, but only "in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength," and wisdom as well. Bishop Burnet, having spoken of the theories of the Romanists, and of those of the Lutherans respecting the rite, says: "Those of Switzerland had, on the other hand, taught that the sacrament was only an institution to commemorate the sufferings of Christ. This, because it was intelligible, was thought by many too low and mean a thing, and not equal to the high expressions that are in the Scripture, of its being the communion [participation] of the body and blood of Christ. The princes of Germany saw what mischief was likely to follow on the diversity of opinion in explaining the sacrament, and as Luther, being impatient in his temper and too much given to dictate, took it very ill to see his doctrine so rejected, so by the indecent way of writing, in matters of controversy, to which the Germans are too much inclined, this difference turned to a direct breach among them. The Landgrave of Hesse had labored much to have these diversities of opinion laid asleep, since nothing gave their common enemies such advantage as their quarreling among themselves. Martin Bucer was of a moderate temper, and had found a middle opinion, though not so easy to be understood. He

thought there was more than a remembrance, to wit, a communication of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament; that, in general, a real presence ought to be asserted, and that the way of explaining it ought not to be anxiously inquired into; and with him Calvin agreed, that it was truly the body and blood of Christ, not figuratively, but really present. The advantage of these general expressions was that thereby they hoped to have silenced the debates between the German and Helvetian divines, whose doctrine came likewise to be received by many of the cities of the empire, and by the Elector Palatine. . . It was also thought that this way of expressing the doctrine would give least offense; for the people were scarce able to bear the opinion of the sacrament being only a figure; but wherein this real presence consisted was not so easy to be made out. Some explained it more intelligibly, in a sense of law, that in the sacrament there was a real application of the merit of Christ's death to those who received it worthily; so that Christ, as crucified, was really present; and these had this to say for themselves, that the words of the institution do not call the elements simply Christ's body and blood, but his body broken, and his blood shed, and that, therefore, Christ was really present, as he was crucified, so that the importance of *really* was *effectually*. Others thought all ways of explaining the manner of the presence were needless curiosities and apt to beget differences; that, therefore, the doctrine was to be established in general words; and, to save the labor, both of explaining and understanding it, it was to be esteemed a mystery." [1]

[1] "Hist. Ref. Ch. of Eng.," Vol. III. pp. 166-168.

The "mystery of inquity" worked mightily—upon the universal and powerful principle of heredity, operative morally and religiously, as well as physically—in these good and great, but mistaken men, as it had "worked mightily" for ages, in their religious ancestry. It had gotten up in its progress tremendous momentum, was hard to stop and to be suppressed; it was dying, but dying hard! Could great men and wise men have been guilty of such puerilities and of such absurdities as we have mentioned, but under some wondrous sorcery, some charm or spell, that warped and blurred and blinded their intellectual as well as moral vision? Such discussions as those to which we have all the more readily called attention because they illustrate and enforce our argument, as well as give useful information, could never have taken place if the plain, intelligible, scriptural idea of the Lord's Supper, as a simple memorial of the sufferings and death of the divine Redeemer, had not been supplanted by the false, protean, and pagan one of a mystical communion.

Under the influence of this false view of the beautiful, but plain and simple, rite of the Lord's Supper many devout and sympathetic spirits, as we have seen even in our own day, with trembling solicitude for departing souls administer to them *in extremis* the wonder-working rite, with an idea of its being something more than the senses, the reason, the holy Scriptures, or a true faith, show it to be—that thus, by this divine elixir, this "medicine of immortality," they may insure their future well-being. Others still, as we have also seen, administer the holy rite as *a help* toward the acceptance and salvation of all such conscience-stricken

and sorrowing souls (yet unbelieving and unregenerate) as they can induce to receive it.

If universally made, the correction of the error in respect to the Lord's Supper for which we plead would remedy the evils which we have mentioned and effect a great change, both externally and internally, in the relations of religious bodies to the rite. It would revolutionize the Romish hierarchy, effect great changes among the Lutherans, and greatly modify the views and practices of other Protestants, especially those of High-church, or of Puseyistic proclivities. Even in some of the more strictly "evangelical" churches, important changes would be wrought, especially changes of thought and theory, of sentiment and spirit, respecting the rite. No longer regarding the observance as a test, "chief symbol," and "principal pledge," of Christian character and fellowship, they would put it upon the same footing, actually and practically, as that of all other religious observances.

But, far above all considerations of sect or party, and of the outward relations of the Lord's Supper to different denominations of Christian people, is the truth, the truth of God, respecting it. If the change of terminology accomplished nothing more than the simple supplanting of error by truth, it would be a great gain, and worthy of all effort. Truth is the greatest relative good in the universe, error the greatest relative evil. Both are essentially active and powerful principles, the one always working for good, the other always working for evil; and as truth, whatever its degree, is always beneficial and conservative, so error, whether great or small, is always injurious and destructive. If truth be

vindicated and established, all interests connected with it will properly adjust themselves, gravitating toward, and revolving about it, as their common center, like the planets toward and about the sun, and assuming and maintaining their just and proper relations to each other. While error is hybrid and heterogeneous, inconsistent and self-contradictory, truth is one and homogeneous, self-consistent and harmonious in all its operations and influences. It is the expression of the universal right, of that law, which is always "holy, just, and good," the infallible interpreter and expositor of God and duty, the pole-star of our earthly course and of our heavenly destiny. Truth secured, all worth contending for is won. All the turmoils and troubles, all the heresies and schisms, all bigotry, intolerance, cruelty, and persecution; in a word, all evil, of every kind and of every degree, is the result of its violation. Its dominion established, all injustice and wrong, all sin and sorrow will forever cease. Error, parent of them all, will perish with its progeny—everything false, however long-lived and tenacious, being necessarily mortal. To stand up for truth and against error, is but another, and a just, rendering of Solomon's fine summing up of all duties and obligations: it "is the whole duty of man." Again, then, we say—and emphasize the declaration with all the force we can command—let the truth be spoken, defended, and maintained, though the heavens fall—but they will not fall!

PART IV

CONSERVATION OF ORIGINAL DESIGN

I

WITNESSES FOR THE TRUTH

In the foregoing discussion we have spoken of the Lord's Supper in respect to its name, nature, and design. We have seen that it has been widely and deeply perverted, and have mentioned some of the evils to which that perversion has led, as well as some of the practical benefits which would result from its remedy, having previously stated, in its various provisions, the scriptural law of the rite, and thus endeavored to determine the proper test and measure of departure from its original design, and to set up the true standard to which return should be made. And we come now, in this fourth part of our work, to consider the means and agencies requisite to the complete restoration of the rite to this proper place and original office in the church.

The first of these which we name, and the most important of all is Witnesses for the Truth.

Though the foul spirit and false principles of paganism, conspiring with the inbred depravity and proneness to evil of the human heart, early polluted and perverted nominal Christianity and dominated Christendom for many ages after paganism itself, as a system, was overthrown throughout the Roman Empire, it must not be supposed that real Christianity was lost. Essentially immortal, like its divine Founder, it could

not perish. It still survived, not only in the immutable word of God, but in many brave and noble human hearts. Christ never left himself without faithful and true witnesses. The real adherents of his cause, though comparatively few, poor, and weak, persecuted and ostracized by their enemies, still held to the essential principles and cherished the genuine spirit of the gospel. They resisted the flagrant perversions and innovations of the times, guarded the oracles of God, and kept the ordinances of his house as they had been delivered unto them. Few and feeble as they were, their voice was scarcely heard, their influence scarcely felt, for long and dreary ages. At length, in the fulness of time, came the grand Christian Renaissance of the sixteenth century. Truth, fallen in the streets, uprose and reasserted itself. Its friends multiplied and soon became a great host. The larger part were unable wholly to emancipate themselves from the bondage of the old errors. Others made further advances in the great work of reform; and, in connection with the descendants and successors of those who had never shared in the early and general apostasy or fallen completely under the dominion of its deadly errors, formed a strong and constantly augmenting force.

In our own day, and especially in our own land, under happier auspices than had before been known, these witnesses for the truth have greatly multiplied and increased in all the elements of strength and influence. Having accomplished, under all their disadvantages, a great work in the past, they may be expected, under greatly improved conditions, to do a grander work in the future. "Set for the defense of

the gospel," they encounter reproach as did their divine Lord, his apostles, and all their brethren of elder times. Because of their devotion to truth and duty in respect to the Lord's Supper particularly, they are "everywhere spoken against," and we cannot too much admire, nor too highly applaud, the Christian manliness with which they bear the formidable *odium theologicum* heaped upon them. In these days of wide-spread skepticism and indifferentism, loose and lax theology, with the spurious liberality by which they are always accompanied, the unscriptural and unreasonable notions engendered and propagated by the erroneous appellation of the sacred Supper, against which we have been so strenuously contending, increase and intensify that odium. Those faithful followers of Christ are often presented in the false light of seeming to withhold, with bigoted and selfish exclusiveness, all Christian recognition and communion from others, while, in fact, with broad and generous charity, they extend to them a hearty sympathy in all matters of common Christian faith and practice, join with them in a thousand acts of personal fellowship and united service of our common Lord, and only make a firm and consistent practical, as well as theoretical, protest against what they conscientiously believe to be their errors.

Let, then, those especially who have already done so much in defending the Lord's Supper against perversion and whose righteous cause has suffered so severely from the improper appellation which it bears, do all they can to correct and remedy the evil. Let them, so far as may be practicable, disuse and banish from their theological and ecclesiastical vocabulary, from their

private speech and their public service the erroneous and unfortunate designation of our Lord's memorial rite, as the communion.

They, more strictly than others, we think, construe the word of God, and more vigilantly and faithfully guard the ordinances; and their distinctive principles find general favor under auspicious circumstances, and make rapid progress among the people, unless forestalled or otherwise obstructed by outward and untoward influences. See how, in the first age, despite the leagued opposition of human and of diabolic enemies, they overspread the world. See how, under the happy auspices of American liberty, they have advanced in our own land. And no wonder! For those principles are the noblest and divinest that have ever been promulgated among men, and should be unspeakably dear to every human heart. They appeal, with the utmost eloquence and force, to the deepest and strongest sentiments of our nature, and summon our best to finest proving of itself.

Upon those sturdy defenders of the faith, who, constantly contending with many and mighty adversaries, often put to outward disadvantage, often suffering serious discomfiture, have always risen superior to their reverses, and, like their divine Lord, plucked victory from the very jaws of defeat—upon these true "knights of the cross," we confidently rely to do valiant service in this contest for truth and the right. Nor shall we be disappointed in our hopes. In the great and glorious principles which they hold, and have ever held, they have given inviolable pledge and guaranty to God and his cause.

That we may have a proper appreciation of the position and spirit of these witnesses for the truth, who have always held the principles to which we refer, and been the unflinching and consistent champions of the purity and integrity of our Lord's memorial rite, and of its proper scriptural administration, and see in the light of their "confession of faith," their binding and controlling creed, how wholly undeserving they are of the opprobrium visited upon them by ungenerous and unjust opponents, and thus derive one of the strongest and most effective arguments, with all fair and magnanimous spirits, against that false and misleading appellation of the sacred Supper, which is in so large a measure responsible for the great wrong; and because the prevalence of those principles is so important and necessary to the reform we advocate, we give, in passing, a brief statement of them. For the sake of greater completeness and a broader and more satisfactory view, we include with the more specially distinctive principles, some held in common with others, but we think, in the main, far more purely and consistently. In their simplest and briefest statement, those principles are:

The fall and ruin of mankind by sin; the incarnation, sufferings, and death of the Son of God for their recovery and restoration; salvation through faith in him without the deeds of the law; the utility of good works; baptism (symbol of burial and resurrection and of spiritual cleansing), the rite of initiation of the believer into the church; the Lord's Supper, the perpetual memorial of the sufferings and death of Christ for his people; the inefficacy without faith of the so-called sacraments; the essential spirituality of the church; the

Bible, the only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice; the inalienable right of private judgment; the inviolability of conscience; the proper priesthood of all believers with access to God through the mediatorship of Jesus only; the Church and the State mutually independent, distinct, and separate; the independence of the individual churches; official parity in the Christian ministry; the spiritual equality of all believers; the proper and indefeasible individuality of man; and the essential voluntariness of all true religion.

These are the great and divine doctrines which, in whole, need only to be announced to unbiased and dispassionate men, in order to be acknowledged as divine. These are the doctrines whose heavenly principle and spirit alone can enfranchise the human mind and the human heart. They are the base on which rest the higher civilization, the purer morality, the fuller freedom of modern times. Having already effected so much, they are destined to effect yet vastly more, in emancipating the nations as well as individual men, and in endowing them with all the blessings of the truest and the largest liberty, whether civil or religious. When universally adopted in heart and in life, religious dissension as well as civil strife will cease; there will be no more bitter and acrimonious debate between believers in one common Lord and Saviour; no more cavilings and quibblings, useless and vexatious questionings, respecting the tender and touching memorial rite of our divine Lord; no more heartburnings, bickerings, and backbitings among Christians, forever; for then, as at the first, all will be of one mind and of one heart.

The great body of the honest truth-loving people, with a sure, unerring instinct of the true and the good, are quick, when not blinded by sinister influences and led astray by selfish and ambitious men, to see and to recognize the value of the great principles which we have just now briefly named. God, in revealing them, has adjusted them to those for whom they were designed. The people in receiving them, do but make natural as well as grateful response to his wisdom and his love.

Surely, then, one would think that such principles, with their intrinsic worth and outward power, should long since have swept in triumph through the world; and that those who have so firmly held and gallantly defended them throughout all the Christian ages, would be the honored of the earth. Ah, no! Jesus held them; and he was crucified. The apostles held them; and they too were martyred. Peter de Bruys and Henry of Lausanne, Hübmaier and Hautz held them, and theirs was a similar fate.

Like many of the chief benefactors of their species, in other lines of life, the noblest witnesses for religious truth have generally failed (however appreciated by the humbler ranks of men) of a true appreciation by the dominant powers of the world, and have often encountered from them the bitterest prejudice and the cruelest persecution. In our own day, and especially in our own country, thanks to the diffusion and increasing prevalence of the powerful principles which we have mentioned, opposition to their most zealous and consistent advocates has been relieved of much of its harshness and severity. But, however modified and softened,

it is still maintained on the part of many, from whom a far nobler spirit and policy might have been reasonably expected.

For this continued opposition to those who have deserved the highest commendation rather than censure, various reasons might be assigned. The one, undoubtedly, of greatest weight is, as we have already intimated, misapprehension of the principle and spirit of their administration of the Christian ordinances, particularly that of the Lord's Supper. Through this misapprehension a wide-spread and bitter outcry is raised against what is called their "close communion" an outcry utterly ungenerous and unjust. Their communion may be strict, but it is not close, in the narrow and sinister sense in which the term is so often used. It has a truly evangelical breadth and openness. They commune widely and freely, as we have seen, with all the followers of Jesus, in prayer, in praise, in efforts for the salvation of the perishing, in every lawful and laudable enterprise for the propagation of divine truth, and for the promotion of the divine glory—in great Bible societies, tract societies, Young Men's Christian Associations, evangelical alliances, union meetings, and other combinations of Christian and philanthropic effort, for the glory of God and the salvation of men. But their very love of the truth and of the ordinances, their very zeal for God's glory and for the spiritual welfare of men, as evinced by their unswerving devotion to the principles we have mentioned, is a bar to their communion with anything and everything which they regard as inimical to those high and holy ends.

In other ages and in less highly favored lands, as we have said, the strong hand of power was laid heavily upon them. They braved the cross and the block, the sword and the gibbet, the dungeon, the rack, the wheel, the stake. Now, however, where sheer power and persecution cannot be brought to bear, other methods, prompted by a seemingly opposite spirit, have sometimes been adopted. The general mind aspires to great breadth of view, the general heart to great breadth of sympathy. The age, as has been said, is "in love with liberality"—and everything that affects its tones or wears its guise is appreciated and applauded; whilst everything, however true and honest and noble, that seems to differ from it, is reproached. Hence some, having, we fear, no true breadth of view, no real breadth of sympathy, however much they may affect them, taking advantage of the scriptural strictness of administration of the ordinances of the gospel, particularly of that of the sacred Supper, on the part of these strict Constructionists of the divine Constitution, seem anxious to fix upon them the odium of illiberality; and thus by disparaging them, to retard the progress of their peculiar principles. Failing to carry the day in fair and open conflict, these partisans of error resort to stratagem. Everybody knows that the true issue, the real point of conflict between them and their opponents, is baptism. But these redoubtable warriors raise the siege of that stronghold, and strive by adroit maneuvers and skilful strategy to accomplish what could not be effected in the open field by main strength and actual prowess. Changing the seat of war, shifting the scenes of battle, they make feints

against points of little or no importance, in the hope, by a covert attack, a disguised system of sapping and mining, of ultimately carrying the citadel itself.

And it must be confessed that these ingenious tactics have not been without effect. The general mind has been greatly confused and perverted. Many sincere lovers of truth have been led unwittingly into error. And many generous and magnanimous spirits have been so influenced as to withhold sympathy from those worthiest of it, while bestowing it upon the undeserving. Hence it is, in part at least, that while the advocates of the great principles just now under review have carried the argument from Scripture and history and scholarship, and constrained the acceptance of their distinctive doctrines by not a few who once rejected them, and their partial acceptance by many more, they have not made the general and triumphant advance in all directions which they have deserved. Nay, while their true and rightful policy is the aggressive, they have sometimes been constrained to assume the defensive.

Nothing, to-day, more interferes with their doctrinal and denominational success, nothing more obstructs the progress of their principles than—let us repeat and emphasize the declaration—the unreasonable clamors so persistently raised against their proper scriptural strictness of administration of our Lord's memorial rite, as an unjust and illiberal "close communion." Unscriptural views of this great memorial ordinance of our Lord have more ministered to those unreasonable clamors, more stimulated and strengthened them, than almost any other cause whatever. Nothing, then,

would more help to retrieve what has been lost and to insure future progress than to impress the popular mind with just conceptions of the real nature and design of the sacred Supper, its scriptural law, the proper position to be assumed, and the true spirit to be cherished in respect to its administration. And it is clear that a most important advance in that direction would be made by correcting the misapprehensions engendered and fostered by the common designation of the rite as the communion.

II

PROPER APPELLATION OF THE RITE

JUSTLY has it been said that "words are things." Most potent and important things they are! So thought Paul when he said to his youthful disciple Timothy, "Hold fast the form of sound words." [1] So thought Pascal when he made his Jansenist friend say to the monk: "By admitting into the church the name of her enemy, you have admitted the enemy himself. Names are inseparable from things." [2] So too thought Shakespeare when he spoke of words as "made of breath, and breath of life," and called them "the very coinage of the brain." [3] They carry with them all that is strongest in the intellect, all that is intensest and most sublimated in the soul, all that is highest and best, all that is lowest and worst in the whole being.

Nothing so well measures and determines the capacity of a man as his words "expressing," as they do, "the subtlest distinctions, the tenderest sentiments, the largest thoughts, and the loftiest imaginations which his heart has at any time conceived"; nothing indeed, gives so complete and just a characterization of a whole people as its words, its language, its literature. They furnish better means of estimating it than any history could do. If they do not tell formally, and in detail,

[1] 2 Tim. 1 : 13. [2] "Provincial Letters," p. 85.
[3] "Hamlet," Act III, Scene IV.

everything the nation has done, they show what it is, has been, and promises to be; expressing every thought of its intellect, every feeling and emotion of its heart, whether high or low, true or false, narrow or broad, noble or ignoble—thus going to the fountainhead and revealing the sources and causes, the seeds and germs, the real factors of its grandest actions and achievements as well as of those least important. The glorious language of the Greeks gives us a higher and better idea of that wonderful people than all that Homer and Herodotus, Xenophon and Thucydides have fabled or truthfully told of their performances.

It is, we may well believe, because words render the whole soul; they are, as it were, its very extract and essence, the emanation and effluence of itself, as the sun-ray is of the sun, the refinement and sublimation of its substance; the attar of roses, and the odor of musk, the finer portions of the roses and the musk themselves; the subtlest and most potent poison, the quintessence of that from which it is distilled—that Jesus says, "The words that I speak unto you are spirit and are life";[4] and, in another place: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned";[5] the apostle James, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man";[6] the psalmist, addressing Jehovah, "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name";[7] and that when the infinite and incomprehensible One, the King eternal, immortal, and invisible would make himself known, clearly and completely "manifest" himself to men and to angels,

[4] John 6 : 63. [5] Matt. 12 : 37.
[6] James 3 : 2. [7] Ps. 138 : 2.

to the whole outward universe, he condensed and concentrated, so to speak, his infinite being in his "Word," the transcendent, all-glorious "Logos," the expression and the rendering of the divine Reason, Truth, Love, Power, and whole Personality.[8]

Inspired words enshrine and utter the supreme intelligence and love and energy. They embody and perpetuate, they clothe and send forth, the "ideas" that "rule the world." By them both heaven and earth were made. By them both consist. They fill the skies with light and life and peace and joy. They fill the universe with truth or falsehood, love or hate. With words "bless we God even the Father," and with words "curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God."[9] Amid all their transporting ecstasies and ravishing delights, nothing will so fill and thrill with rapture the hearts of the redeemed as the gracious words of their divine Redeemer: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."[10] Nothing on earth so gratifies human vanity and self-esteem as flattering words. Nothing so soothes and assuages human sorrow as soft and sympathetic words. Nothing so rouses, warms, and stimulates the cold and sluggish soul as "words that burn." Nothing so encourages and stimulates modest worth, so raises and strengthens the depressed and sinking spirit, as words of commendation and of cheer. And, contrariwise, nothing so sorely wounds human sensibility and pride, so rankles and festers in the human heart as words that "eat, as doth

[8] John 1 : 14; 1 Tim. 3 : 16. [9] James 3 : 9.
[10] Matt. 25 : 34.

a canker." [11] Pierce one with poisoned arrows, run him through with dart or dagger, fell him to the earth with club or cudgel, and he will not be so grievously wounded, as by the sharper shafts of envenomed tongues, the deadlier darts and daggers of bitter and vindictive words, the crueler clubs and cudgels of stormy and stunning speech. "O speak to me no more!" said the guilty queen to her upbraiding son, "thy words like daggers enter in mine ears." [12] "Oft," said the lion-hearted Caius Martius, "when blows have made me stay, I fled from words." [13]

"There is," says the celebrated Isaac Barrow, "a strange enchantment in words; which being (although with no great color of reason) assumed, do work on the fancies of men, especially of the weaker sort." [14] "Words innocently or carelessly used are, by interpretation, extended to signify great matters, or what you please. For instance, the word bishop may import any kind of superintendency or inspection; hence Saint Peter came to be reckoned bishop of Rome, because, in virtue of his apostolic office, he had inspection over that church, founded by him, and might exercise some episcopal acts. The word head doth signify any kind of eminence; the word prince any priority; the word to preside any kind of superiority or prominence; hence some Fathers attributing these names to Saint Peter, they are interpreted to have thought him sovereign in power over the apostles. And because some did give like terms to the pope, they infer his superiority in

[11] 2 Tim. 2 : 17. [12] "Hamlet," Act III, Scene IV.
[13] "Coriolanus," Act II, Scene II.
[14] Barrow's "Works," Vol. III, "Treatise of Pope's Supremacy," p. 201.

power over all bishops; notwithstanding such Fathers did express contrary judgment. . . Divers prevalent factions did assume to themselves the name of Catholics; and the Roman Church, particularly, hath appropriated that word to itself; . . and the perpetual canting of this term hath been one of its effectual charms to weak people, 'I am a Catholic,' that is, an 'universal,' therefore all I hold is true; this is their great argument. The words successor of Peter, apostolic see, *prima sedes*, have been strongly urged for arguments of papal authority; the which have, beyond their true force (for indeed they signify nothing), had a strange efficacy upon men of understanding and wisdom." [15]

"The generality of mankind," says Doctor South in one of his great discourses on "The Fatal Imposture and Force of Words," "is wholly and absolutely governed by words and names; without, nay, for the most part, even against, the knowledge men have of things. The multitude, or common rout, like a drove of sheep, or a herd of oxen, may be managed by any noise or cry which their driver shall accustom them to. And he who will set up for a skilful manager of the rabble, so long as they have but ears to hear, need never inquire whether they have any understanding whereby to judge, but with two or three popular, empty words, . . well turned and humored, may whistle them backward and forward, upward and downward till he is weary, and get upon their backs when he is so. As for the meaning of the word itself, that may shift for itself; and as for the sense and reason of

[15] Ibid., Vol. III, "Treat. Pope's Supremacy," pp. 200, 201.

it, that has little or nothing to do here; only let it sound full and round, and chime right to the humor which is at present agog (just as a big, long, rattling name is said to command even adoration from a Spaniard), and no doubt, with this powerful, senseless engine, the rabble-driver shall be able to carry all before him, or to draw all after him, as he pleases. For a plausible, insignificant word, in the mouth of an expert demagogue, is a dangerous and dreadful weapon. You know when Cæsar's army murmured and grew troublesome, no argument from reason or interest could satisfy or appease them; but as soon as he gave them the appellation of *Quirites,* the tumult was immediately hushed, and all were quiet and content, and took that one word in good payment for all. Such is the trivial slightness and levity of most minds. And, indeed, take any passion of the soul of man, while it is predominant and afloat, and just in the critical height of it, nick it with some lucky or unlucky word, and you may as certainly overrule it to your own purpose, as a spark of fire falling upon gunpowder will infallibly blow it up. The truth is, he who shall duly consider these matters will find that there is a certain bewitchery or fascination in words, which makes them operate with a force beyond what we can naturally give an account of. There is hardly any rank, order, or degree of men, but more or less have been captivated and enslaved by words. It is a weakness, or rather a fate, which attends both high and low: the statesman who holds the helm, as well as the peasant who holds the plow. . . Such an enchantment is there in words; such a humiliating demonstration of the absurd empire and

usurpation of words over things, and that the greatest affairs and most important interests of the world are carried on by things not as they are, but as they are called." [16] "A single word, *Filioque,* inserted into the Nicene creed split Christendom into East and West." [17]

Referring to the strong statements of South, respecting the "fatal imposture and force of words," and indorsing them, Archbishop Trench says: "How awful, yea, how fearful, is this force and imposture of theirs, leading men captive at will! There is an atmosphere about them which they are evermore diffusing, an atmosphere of life or death, which we insensibly inhale at each moral breath we draw. 'Winds of the soul,' as we have already heard them called, they fill its sails, and are continually impelling it upon its course, to heaven or to hell." [18]

Closing his lecture "On the Morality in Words," the same eminent writer says: "These illustrations, to which it would be easy to add more, justify all that has been asserted of a moral element existing in words; so that they do not hold themselves neutral in that great conflict between good and evil, light and darkness, which is dividing the world; that they are not satisfied to be passionless vehicles, now of the truth, and now of lies. We see, on the contrary, that they continually take their side, are some of them children of light, others children of this world, or even of darkness; they beat with the pulses of our life; they stir with our passions; we clothe them with light; we steep

[16] South's Sermons, Vol. I, Ser. 21.

[17] Belford's Magazine, April, 1890, Art. "Wanted—A Christian Confession of Faith."

[18] "Study of Words," pp. 101, 102.

them in scorn; they receive from us the impressions of our good and of our evil, which again they are most active still further to propagate and diffuse. . . Is there not something very solemn and very awful in wielding such an instrument as this of language is, with such power to wound or to heal, to kill or to make alive? and may not a deeper meaning than hitherto we have attached to it lie in that saying: 'By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned'?" [19]

In the late war in this country, between the States, two words, constantly used and strongly emphasized by one of the belligerent parties, and virtually accepted by the other, were worth more than whole armies to the winning side. They gave it a moral force, far superior to any mere physical strength and prowess. They roused and rallied and sustained its friends both at home and abroad, and everywhere weakened and depressed, if unconsciously, its opponents. Those words, with their kindred terms and phrases, were, on the one side, the "Union," representing nationality and established government, with all the generous and heart-stirring memories, all the high and inspiring hopes connected with the noble term itself, as well as with the powerful prestige, glorious associations, and far-reaching relations of those great and cardinal things for which it stood; and, on the other side, the "Rebellion," representing to the popular mind revolt against government, insurrection against law and order, the destruction of the "best government on earth," the disruption and dissolution of "the glorious

[19] "Study of Words," pp. 121-123.

Union," with the powerful presumption of wrong against the " Rebels " and the " Rebellion."

The late distinguished president of William and Mary College, Thomas Roderick Dew, illustrating in his lectures the force of significant words and names, was accustomed to say that " a certain class of Christians enjoyed a great felicity and advantage in their name, Baptists." Sitting at his feet, as one of his pupils, we were much struck with his statement at the time; and our conviction of the justness of his declaration has been strengthened by subsequent experience and observation. And we think that those Christians who bear the noble name to which he referred should never cease to render thanks to God for making, in his divine providence, their name and their principles powerfully coincident and cooperative in the propagation of his truth and the establishment of his kingdom in the world.

It was, we may well think, in view of this strange and tremendous force of words, this " verbal magic," this " sorcery of speech," that that prince of the prophets, Isaiah, said, in the powerful language which we have endeavored to give a threefold emphasis, by thrice repeating it: " Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."

Such is the present writer's conception of the force of generally accepted and established terms, that he, contending with a mere word, feels himself a very pigmy in conflict with a giant. And nothing but the belief that in the " unequal strife," reason and right,

and truth and God, are on his side could inspire and nerve him to the combat.

That word so full of the divine amenities and sweetest sympathies of the soul, so full of its noblest charities, so redolent of friendship and of brotherliness, of tenderness and love—that, as we have already so often called it, beautiful word, "communion," has cast a spell upon the Christian world, a spell that it will be hard, if possible, ever to break. Like many another lovely and seductive form, it has led away captive those who have been too much enamored of it, into temptation and error and sin. With voice bewitching as that of the siren on the enchanted isle of Calypso, whose resistless fascination, as the poets tell us, lured many a hapless mariner from his true bearings into the maelstroms of deceitful seas, or into the no less treacherous and destructive vortices of an illicit love, it has charmed many a susceptible and enthusiastic Christian, glowing with all the warmth of a universal sympathy, from the divinely ordained order and decorum of the church of God, into a looseness and lawlessness of procedure, as injurious to that, as it is displeasing to him. Because of its unwarranted, unscriptural, often uncharitable, and, we fear, sometimes sinister use, in connection with the most touching and affecting ordinance of God's house, that sweet and beautiful word has been, we honestly believe, more hurtful to the honor and highest interests of that house, more damaging and weakening to those most devoted to it, than many an infidel sophist or malignant persecutor.

Speaking of "words carelessly or dishonestly employed," Trench says: "When a man has had any

actual experience of this, and at all perceived how far this mischief reaches, he is sometimes almost tempted to say with Shakespeare, 'Out, idle words, servants to shallow fools'; to adopt the saying of his clown, 'Words are grown so false, I am loathe to prove reason with them.' He cannot, however, forego their employment; not to say that he will presently perceive that this falseness of theirs, whereof he accuses them, this cheating power, is not of their proper use, but only of their abuse; he will see that, however they may have been enlisted in the service of lies, they are yet of themselves most true; and that, where the bane is, there the antidote should be sought as well. If Goethe's 'Faust' denounces words, and the falsehood of words, it is by the aid of words that he does it." [20]

And now, in the spirit, and upon the principle of this high teaching, let us act; and as the way to overcome evil is to oppose good to it; the way to dispel darkness, to pour light upon it; the way to suppress error, to bring the truth to bear upon it; the way to supplant a false word, to set up the true in its stead—we take occasion, seriously and earnestly, to suggest that, if the Lord's Supper be not name enough for our Lord's memorial ordinance; if we must have another name by which to designate it, that it be, not the communion, but a name equally beautiful and far more just, that of THE COMMEMORATION.

In favor of this, rather than the other appellation, are, as we have seen, both reason and the word of God, as well as practical considerations of the highest value.

[20] "Study of Words," pp. 293, 294.

III

THE SUPREME DIFFICULTY

To make the much needed correction which we have suggested and so much insisted upon, will, we know, be difficult, if not impossible. Some will perhaps smile at our simplicity, wonder at our temerity, in making the proposal. But, however that may be, in all seriousness and solemnity, we repeat it, and put it forward in the boldest relief that we can give. And, in vindication of our hardihood, we have, *apropos,* a weighty and assuring precedent. We have seen that "the Reformers of the Church of England" still claiming to be Catholic, "laid aside the unseemly epithet" of the mass, which for more than a thousand years had been almost without challenge applied as a name to the Lord's Supper, and "restored the original, correct, and expressive appellation." Why may not the same thing be accomplished in respect to this other erroneous appellation of the sacred rite, the beautiful but false and seductive epithet of the communion? "What has been done may be done again."

The great ecclesiastical and theological error of terminology, against which we so warmly protest, was long in establishing itself. But it struck its roots deeply and spread them widely, and has grown with its scions into grand proportions. And it may be that a similar length of time will be required to disestablish

and uproot it. Yet not necessarily so. The giant oak of a thousand years is often prostrated in a moment by the blast of heaven, and may be felled in a few hours by the well-directed strokes of human hands. And so may it be with this deep-struck, wide-spreading tree of error. Still, however sanguine, we can hardly hope it. It is a very tower of strength. Like the mass, it has been built up and buttressed, entrenched and fortified, for more than half a score of centuries, by millions of cunning hands; and that will be a strong, as well as cunning, hand that shall overthrow it. Thine, O God, though thou mayest work through human agents, alone can do it.

This egregious error, born of blended human sentiment and sympathy, conceit and superstition, enshrining itself and taking shape in the loveliest and most attractive forms of language, associating itself with all the higher and more enduring modes of speech, as well as with the ordinary and more transient, leaguing with itself the most puissant earthly allies; laying under tribute letters and art, eloquence and song, the highest social culture, with all the subtile and subduing influences of a dreamy and imaginative, morbid and mystical religion; this error, hoary and venerable with age, sanctified by immemorial prescription, prestige, and authority, is too thoroughly interwoven with the fabric, too deeply embedded and ingrained in the whole body of Christian literature to be easily eliminated; too widely and thoroughly engrafted upon every species of writing, as well as of oral expression, to be readily exscinded; too completely naturalized, so to speak, in the general sentiment and sympathy; too closely and inti-

mately blended with pleasant experiences and associations, tender memories and cherished hopes to be at once discarded; like those "seducing spirits," offspring and emissaries of him who sometimes "is transformed into an angel of light," and "his ministers" into "the ministers of righteousness," this spirit, so winning and enticing, is too pervasive of all our thought and feeling, too intimately connected with all our life, too thoroughly informs it, to be expelled at will, or to be exorcised by the most fervent prayers and the most solemn adjurations. Writers of every name and of every shade of doctrine, ancients and moderns, Papists and Protestants, Baptists and Pedobaptists, Calvinists and Arminians, "possessed" by it, have accepted and accredited its teachings.

But for the warping and biasing influence of the great error which we are opposing, and which, as we have seen, confounds the incidental and the accidental with the essential and the necessary, the particular with the general, and so the special commemoration of Christ with the general communion of Christians, the great and noble Robert Hall, so elegant and classic in style, usually so clear and accurate a thinker, so philosophical, broad-minded, and generous, and generally so scriptural, never could have been betrayed into that strange misconception which is the basis of his whole theory respecting the observance of the holy rite; a theory in which he is at issue with almost all Christendom, differing as decidedly from Pedobaptists as from Baptists, and expending and wasting upon the defense of it a wealth of learning and a force and splendor of intellect rarely vouchsafed to man—the theory, that

nothing is " an indispensable condition of communion " at the table of the Lord " which the New Testament has not enjoined as a condition of salvation." [1]

These remarks respecting Robert Hall are applicable, substantially, to the celebrated Dr. John M. Mason, a man of perhaps equal learning, and of similar grandeur of mind, and who, like Hall, through his fervid and generous sympathies, warm and susceptible imagination, was captivated and deceived by the splendid sophism which led Hall astray.

A large part of that able work, written some years since by the late Doctor Curtis in the interest of the general Baptist view of the Lord's Supper (and from which we have quoted two or three brief but valuable paragraphs), owes its origin to the unfortunate error involved in the false name of the Lord's Supper; and, but for it, he would not have learnedly and eloquently encumbered a perfectly plain and simple subject.

And this remark will apply to a number of similar treatises. Indeed, almost all the formal works of the Baptists (as well as of others) upon this subject; their discussions in the periodical press, and their oral discussions take shape and color from the same erroneous view. It will be hard for them, though the great ecclesiastical and theological error in question has constantly stood in their way and obstructed their progress, to yield their old ideas, and to alter their old methods in respect to it; hard, in any degree, to discredit or disparage their own literary and theological offspring. Iconoclastic as they might be, under other circumstances, it were hardly wonderful if they hesitated to

[1] Hall's " Works," Vol. II, " Preface to Terms of Communion."

cast down and break the images which they themselves have raised.

But a much nobler principle than that of personal pride and self-appreciation (carried too far and wrongly applied), may make them still, indirectly at least, countenance and strengthen the great error. Though they have so often been spoken of as radical and even revolutionary, they are eminently conservative. They are not "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." [2] They are no light-minded, newsmongering Athenians, "spending their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." [3] They have no affinity for new-fangled theories. They are no followers of "new men, studious of new things." No! they "stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." [4] They are in love with the ancient gospel. They never weary of the "old, old story." Whilst "all the world wondered" and wandered "after the Beast," [5] they never did it. Theirs it was, and is, and will ever be, as a people, a church—beloved and loving spouse of Christ—to raise, amidst the loud and foul idolatrous conclamation, unceasing counter-cry, and to shout to the wondering and the wandering: "Behold the Lamb of God!" O "Woman of the wilderness!" radiant and beautiful! with eye long dimmed by tears, and head long bowed by sorrow, thou comest up sublimely from thy prolonged and dreary exile, "leaning upon thy beloved," [6] with this triumphant, self-abnegating acclaim of thy double love

[2] Eph. 4 : 14. [3] Acts 17 : 21. [4] Jer. 6 : 16.
[5] Rev. 13 : 3. [6] Rev. 12; Cant. 8 : 5.

—love of thy Lord, and love of thy children—heaving from thy swelling heart.

This very firmness and stability, this strong indisposition to change what once they have accepted, may make them still patronize the erroneous appellation of the Lord's Supper. They never recognized the main errors involved in that false name. Still they have allowed, almost unchallenged, the word itself. They have not always borne in mind the wise and weighty adage which we have so strongly emphasized, that "words are things." Conservators of truth, let them not become conservators of error, even in a name. Let them be quick to disown and denounce it. Pride of seeming consistency; unwillingness, while so strenuously contending for the right, to appear in anything to have been in the wrong, may influence them. But they who have done so many higher, aye, and harder things, surely can rise superior to this lower and less difficult one.

The misusage in question, from custom and fixed habit, has become so natural and so convenient, is connected with so many delightful associations, so many sweet and cherished memories, and is therefore so dear, that it will perhaps seem to some not only unwise but even a cruel violence to disturb it.

Other ecclesiastical terms, employed in an unscriptural sense, pervade our literature, and are strongly entrenched in it. Yet many brave men, and able, constantly protest against them and resolutely assail unscriptural usages connected with them. For consistency's sake, for something dearer still, for truth's sake, for the sake of their dear Lord and his glorious king-

dom among men, let them do the same thing in respect to the false usage of the term so unfortunately applied to our Lord's memorial rite. Though it be dear as a right eye, or a right hand, since it offends, let it be sacrificed.

If, however, it be too firmly fixed in our theological and other literature, too strongly entrenched in the general mind, and in common speech, to be dislodged from its strongholds, all possible and feasible means should be employed to counteract and neutralize the evils which it propagates and fosters.

And we make no doubt that that, at least, may be accomplished with respect to it, which has been achieved in respect to certain errors connected with the baptismal controversy. In defiance of genius and learning, wit and rhetoric, specious and subtle sophistry, worldly rank and power, and wealth and influence, the protest made against those errors has not been made in vain—as the state and tone of the popular mind, as well as of general religious literature amply attest.

IV

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In closing our discussion, we take occasion to say that we trust our work may be, in some humble degree at least, useful to the righteous cause so zealously espoused and so bravely defended by those noble Christian people to whom we have, in previous sections of our treatise, specially referred, and with whose principles and practice respecting the Lord's Supper we are in full accord and hearty sympathy. Their distinction and honor it has been, if not to make for Christ a conquest of the world, at least to hold for him, through all the Christian ages, and against fearful odds, the citadels of truth. To hold them is still their high and glorious mission.

That they appreciate this mission is manifest from the words of one of the ablest and most revered of their writers. He says: "One of the earliest corruptions of Christianity consisted in magnifying the importance of its ceremonies, and ascribing to them a saving efficacy. With this superstitious reverence of outward forms, a tendency was introduced to corrupt these forms, and substitute ceremonies of human invention for the ordinances of God. To restore these ordinances to their original purity, and at the same time to understand and teach that outward rites have no saving efficacy, appears to be a service to which God has

specially called the Baptists. We are often charged with attaching too much importance to immersion; but the notion that baptism possesses a sacramental efficacy finds no advocates in our ranks. It introduced infant baptism, and prevailed with it, and it still lingers among those by whom infant baptism is practised. Our principles, by restricting baptism to those who are already regenerate, subvert the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and exhibit the ceremony in its proper relation to experimental religion. To give due prominence to spirituality, above all outward ceremony, is an important service to which God has called our denomination." [1]

May He whose prerogative it is to fire the heart with valor and to nerve the arm with strength, make them equal to the arduous yet inspiring and sublime duty assigned them.

We also trust that what we have written, so far as it may be read, will be received with Christian charity and candor by such of our common Christian brotherhood as may not be agreed with us in the views which we have disclosed, prove not altogether unacceptable or unprofitable to them, and tend to bring us all, of every name, more closely together in the delightful fellowship of our common faith. Nothing within the range of our experience and observation more saddens our heart than exhibitions of a lack of true unity, and the absence of that genuine Christian sympathy and brotherly love, by which it is inspired and sustained.

In our day, as in all times, hostility to the gospel is wide-spread and intense. Many of the finest and most

[1] Dagg's "Manual of Theology," Part II, p. 301.

cultivated intellects of the world are leading the cohorts of error, of infidelity, and atheism, with a vigor and audacity truly appalling. They are diffusing a double-distilled poison of skepticism throughout the most advanced nations of the world. They are misleading and corrupting the thought and the morals of the very flower of our youth. They are doing much to sap the foundations of all faith, and to inaugurate a universal reign of doubt—doubt, dark, dreary, and despairing, and so hopelessly depraving and destructive. They have brought upon the very masses of the people, upon our cities and towns and rural districts, upon our families, upon our very churches, upon the ministers of the churches even, a very epidemic of unbelief and misbelief, and plunged, through blank and black despair, many bright intellects and naturally noble spirits into the awful gulf of "pessimism" (teaching that all things are not ultimately for the best, but for the worst), only less horrible than that of hell itself.

Oh, then, surely all lovers of the truth and of those who are dying for lack of it, should "come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty"; against that "god of this world" who "hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them."[2] Oh, surely all the sons of God, led by his Spirit, the spirit of truth, should rally to that standard, which—now that the great enemy, the father of lies, has "come in like a flood"—the blessed Spirit, flying to the rescue, is uplifting against him, and help to stay the tide of death and desolation.

[2] 2 Cor. 4 : 4.

Ah! these divisions and subdivisions of God's people; this breaking and disintegrating of "the pillar and ground of the truth"; this exhaustion of strength in mutual conflict over issues that involve no principle, but only prejudice blind and unreasoning—these are the things that stay the final and complete triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom. Never will that triumph be accomplished while these conflicts and divisions last. It is only when they have ceased that the glorious Spouse of Christ, as Solomon sings of her, shall "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," [3] and that to her, as Queen of earth, and Queen of heaven, all shall make obeisance.

That unity of his people for which Jesus prayed is necessary to the conversion of the world. Without it the world will not believe. With it the faith of the world will be compelled. This is implied in the words of Jesus when, in his intercessory prayer for his people, just before he suffered, he thus besought the Father: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." [4]

The exhibition of such unity, which no human legislation or philosophy, no earthly power at all has been able to effect, will be a demonstration to the world of the divinity of the Power that can and does effect it; a demonstration that will convince the judgment of men, that will carry the intellect of the world. Carrying the intellect, that unity will too, by its beauty and

[3] Song of Sol. 6 : 10. [4] John 17 : 21.

amiability, carry the heart of the world; for every one, however cold and selfish and unloving, responds to the words of the psalmist: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" [5] Further still, this unity will develop in the church a power invincible, irresistible, that shall go forth "conquering and to conquer," that shall "triumph in every place" over all opposition, till, to Him "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess." [6]

Then, and not till then, shall the vision of the seer of the Apocalypse be realized. There will be heard great voices in heaven, saying: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." [7] And all the voices of earth, like the sound of many waters, gladly and triumphantly responding, shall say, *Amen!*

Oh, let us, then, be one! Let us generously and broadly "commune" with each other (always in accordance with the law of Christ), "in every good word and work," and not cramp our fellowship by a test that is no test; and which our divine Lord has never imposed upon his people or his churches. Ours be the motto so honorable to the heart that inspired it: "In things essential, unity; in things indifferent, liberty; in all things, charity."

Finally, and above all, let us say that we would venture humbly to hope that our work may be acceptable to our divine Lord; and that, by his blessing upon it, it may be promotive of a better understanding and a worthier observance of his holy ORDINANCE OF COMMEMORATION.

[5] Ps. 133 : 1. [6] Rom. 14 : 11. [7] Isa. 45 : 23; Eph. 2 : 10.

DATE DUE

MAY 2 1 1990			
JAN 0 2 2002			
GAYLORD			PRINTED IN U.S.A.

265.3
J79

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